STAR OF MYSORE

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OUR EVENING DAILY

49th

ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL ISSUE

MYSURU Monday 16th February 2026
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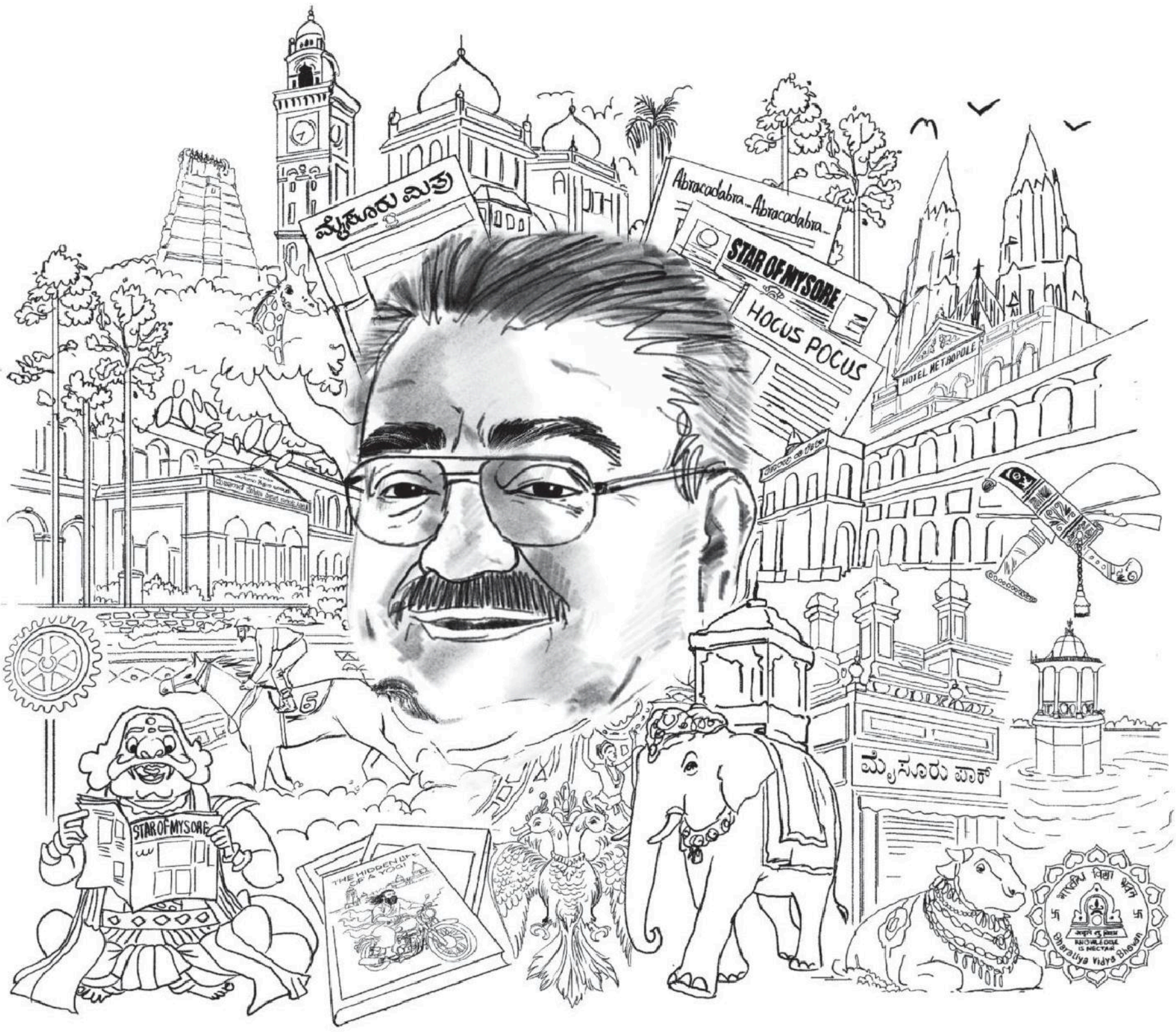

We grew alongside
what he wrote.

SANKALP

STAR OF MYSORE

"We believe comment is free, but facts are sacred."

Editor: M. GOVINDE GOWDA, M.A.

Mysuru, Monday 16th February 2026

Thank You

It was this day, nay this very evening, 48 years ago that STAR OF MYSORE was born in this city as an Evening English Newspaper. Happily it continues to be your favourite eveninger.

From this evening, we will be entering 49th year of publication. And as we do so, we gratefully remember all those who made it possible to reach this milestone and salute them with gratitude and humility.

Bringing out a special issue on our anniversary has been a tradition with us ever since the beginning of this newspaper. We are specially beholden to our readers and advertisers for their unstinting support in making this possible.

We have been following all along an independent editorial policy without aligning ourselves with any political party, community, group, ideology or vested interest and this policy will continue. Our first editorial titled *"A Star Is Born,"* which is printed alongside, declares this policy more eloquently.

As a newspaper, we strongly believe our survival depends solely on our usefulness to the society and on the service we render to our readers and advertisers. Which is why we take up just causes and important issues in a crusading spirit to protect readers' interest while widening our readership base. And advertisers get VALUE for their money. After all, it is the credibility of STAR OF MYSORE as a brand and its pulling-power that should matter to our advertisers rather than the cost of advertising.

On this occasion, we also remember the truth that change is a constant in any organisation that wishes to grow — not just survive. And we are bracing ourselves for an array of changes from content to pre-press to printing technology. All this to ensure your addiction to STAR OF MYSORE — for all the news of *Namma Cheluva Mysuru* and more. We have specialist contributors who provide expert views on current issues and interest.

Welcome. Sit back, relax, make yourself a nice cuppa and experience your reading pleasure every evening.

And finally a big "Thank You" — to our subscribers, advertisers, contributors, our staff, our agents and paper delivery boys who together have teamed up to make STAR OF MYSORE a success story among evening newspapers in India. A very good evening to You.

EDITOR'S BOTTOMLINE

"I will now briefly outline our objectives for next year — We gotta make more money."

NEWS SPARKLERS

Eating a piece of wedding cake every year

Florida: For the past 60 years, this couple have been celebrating their anniversary by eating a piece out of their wedding cake — not a replica, the original one!

Ann and Ken Fredericks were married on 19 August, 1955 and Ann's grandmother had baked a three-layer fruitcake for the occasion. The top layer of that cake, baked six decades ago, still exists in a metal Maxwell Coffee House can. "Every year, we unwrap it, pour brandy over it — because you need to moisten it — and we break off a piece," Ann said.

"Everybody just looks at us with amazed looks when they hear about it. Our children are appalled that we would be eating something that's 60 years old. But believe me, it's quite tasty, as long as it's got enough brandy on it. And it's never made us sick," she said.

Ann and Ken met as students at Syracuse University and they lived in New York during the first few years of their marriage. But in 1968, they decided to follow Ken's parents to Florida. Ken, now 85, worked as a music teacher before he retired, while Ann, 81, was a nurse for 27 years.

'Costly' mistake

Berlin: A romantic anniversary plan took an unexpected turn after a young German man's surprise for his girlfriend ended in a costly mistake.

A young couple stands beside a table with a large white gift box tied with red ribbons. The man places a balloon inside the gift box. Attached to it is a long chain made of cash notes. The money is carefully linked together, forming a stream that is meant to rise up when the box is opened. As soon as the woman lifts the lid, the balloon rises, pulling the chain of cash into the air.

The entire chain of cash amounting to 2,000 dollars (about Rs. 1.8 lakh) detaches from the box and shoots up into the night sky along with the balloons. The woman quickly runs after it, trying to grab the floating money, but it moves too fast. The boy throws his coat in the air in an attempt to catch it, but he fails. The shocked man falls to the ground in disbelief and covers his face with his hands. The woman kneels beside him and tries to comfort him. She says, "It's the thought that counts." He replies, "Babe, that was my salary." She responds, "Make more money."

HEALTH CAPSULE

Liver damage often remains painless until advanced stages, making routine screening crucial.

By Dr. Nischay R - Consultant – Gastroenterology & Hepatology, Manipal Hospitals, Mysuru

manipalhospitals LIFE'S ON

** Health Capsule is not intended to be of a diagnostic nature*

A Star Is Born

In an age where birth of a nation is a minor event, birth of a child is a curse, the birth of a newspaper is bound to be a non-event. More so when its founders and the Editor are from among the common men with no past of any distinction. Which is why there was no ceremonial inauguration of the publication of *Star of Mysore* or any promotional campaign.

It is natural, our readers may want to know what manner of a newspaper this *Star of Mysore* will be. A run-of-the-mill type that flutters and falls gently, like an unwanted old leaf, through the window into your drawing room every evening or the one that will interest you to welcome home and read with pleasure.

Yes, the *Star of Mysore* is conceived and produced to belong to the latter category. This is a local paper and as such we are more interested in what is happening in our immediate surroundings rather than in the distant Delhi everyday.

Our investigative reporter will sneak into the Municipal Council Hall, go nosing around University campus, walk footloose along the Police beat, amble into the hospitals and slink under the seat of power to publish in cold print all that you always wanted to know but could not.

Now a STAR is born to fulfil that need. We, the publishers, reporters and the Editor are aware of our responsibility to our readers. And it is our hope that we will be able to find a responsive readership in you. We are also aware that in the final analysis, it is your patronage and support (both from the readers and the advertisers) that will sustain us in our noble goals and work-a-day life.

The best cannot come in the beginning. We have many constraints. We are improving now and will improve as days pass by. You will soon find better headline types, brighter layout and excellent printing. We are trying. The Star must shine.

[16.2.1978]

REALLY...?

- ***Retro editions:** Many newspapers celebrate milestones with special 'retro' editions, reprinting their first-ever issue or showcasing historic front pages. These often become collector's items.*
- ***Ink and Paper Smell:** Readers often describe the smell of fresh ink and paper as nostalgic. Some anniversary campaigns even bottle this scent as a quirky promotional gimmick.*

LAUGHTER THE BEST MEDICINE

An old grandmother goes to the newspaper store daily, buys a newspaper, glances at it briefly and immediately throws it away.
One morning the sales clerk asks curiously: "Grandmother, why do you always throw away the newspaper immediately?" Grandmother: "... oh, I just look at the obituaries..."
Salesman: "But the obituaries are not on the front page..."
Grandmother: "...the obituary I'm waiting for will be on the front page..."

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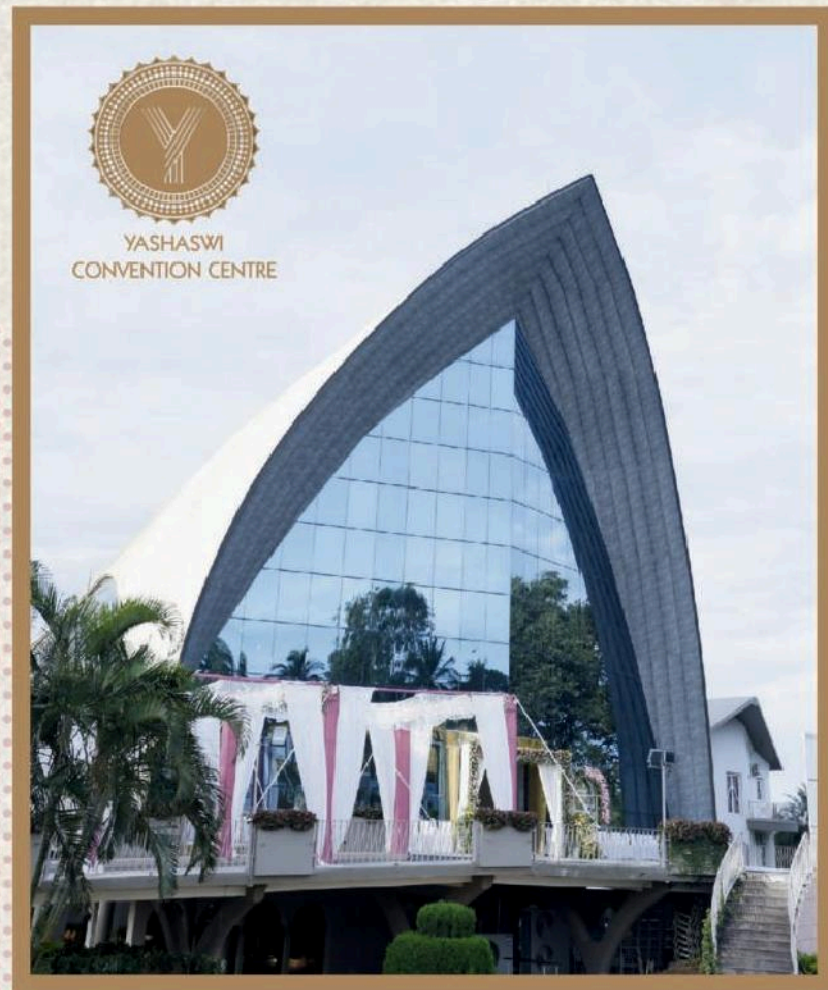

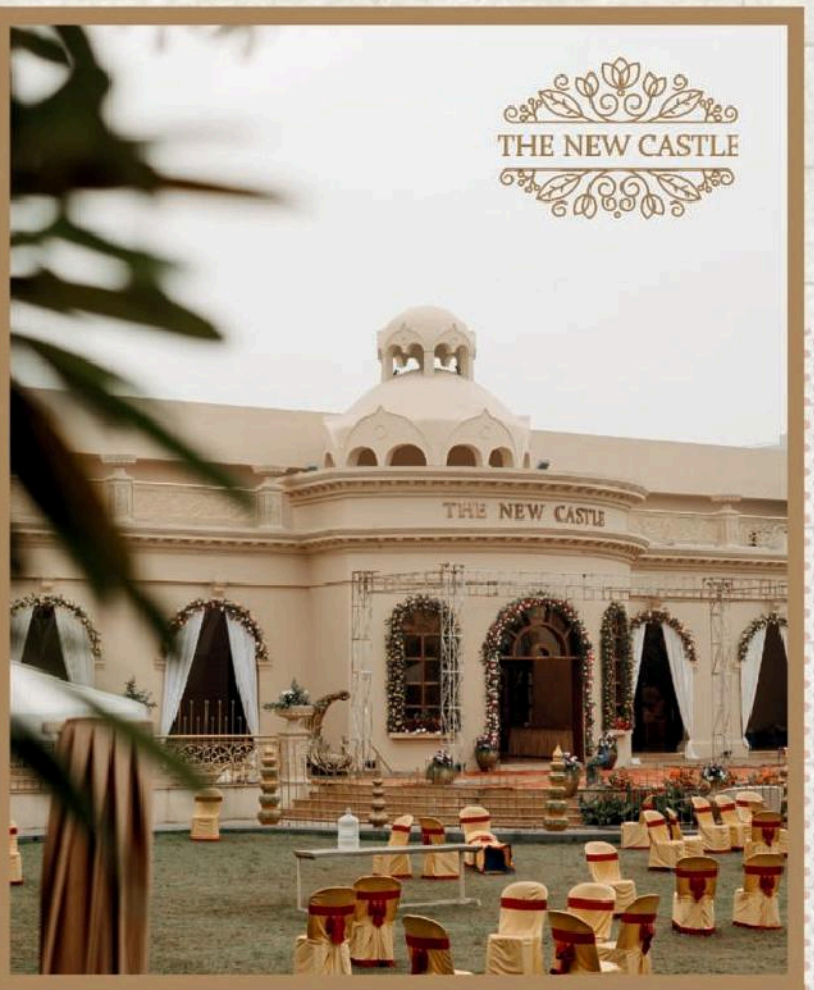

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Service Beyond Legacy

My Journey as a Member of Parliament

The Titular Head of the erstwhile Mysore Royal Family, Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar, now the Mysuru-Kodagu MP, had written an article titled *'Wadiyars Created Institutions of Ever-lasting Value'* for the 39th Anniversary Special Issue of *Star of Mysore* on Feb. 16, 2016, after he was coronated in May 2015.

Now, a decade later, he writes again as the representative of the people of Mysuru-Kodagu in *Star of Mysore*, the voice of the people of Mysuru, as it enters the 49th year of publication.

Yaduveer Wadiyar, in this article, reflects on his journey as a first-time Lok Sabha Member and outlines his efforts to balance development with heritage preservation while addressing the aspirations of his diverse constituents. —Ed

By Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar
MP, Mysuru-Kodagu

Public life, for me, has never been about stepping into a role defined by history alone; it has been about translating legacy into responsibility.

When I entered Parliament as the elected representative of Mysuru and Kodagu, I did so with a clear understanding that heritage may open a door, but service alone sustains trust.

My journey as a Member of Parliament has therefore been grounded in learning about governance, about people's aspirations and about the discipline required to turn intent into tangible outcomes.

The early days in Parliament were marked by immersion. Legislative procedure, committee systems, policy scrutiny and Constituency coordination form a complex ecosystem that no briefing note can fully capture.

Observing senior Parliamentarians, engaging with subject experts and working closely with Ministries helped me understand the mechanics of effective representation.

I quickly realised that influence lies not in rhetoric alone but in persistence — in asking the right questions, following through with departments and aligning local priorities with national policy frameworks.

Equally formative has been my time within the Constituency. Mysuru and Kodagu represent an extraordinary blend of urban heritage, agricultural livelihoods, ecological sensitivity and emerging aspirations of youth and entrepreneurs.

Interacting with farmers, small business owners, students, veterans and civic groups continually recalibrates my priorities. Representation cannot be abstract; it must be informed by lived realities — whether addressing infrastructure bottlenecks, supporting cultural institutions or facilitating access to Central Schemes.

Development and preservation

One of the defining aspects of my tenure has been working to position development alongside preservation. Mysuru's identity as a cultural capital and Kodagu's environmental significance require that modernisation be carefully calibrated.

Efforts toward improving connectivity, strengthening tourism ecosystems and advocating for infrastructure upgrades have therefore been paired with support for conservation, heritage promotion and sustainable land-use approaches. I consider this balancing act central to responsible stewardship of the Constituency.

Parliamentary interventions — through debates, questions and committee participation — have provided an avenue to connect local issues to national discourse.

Whether raising concerns that affect regional industries, emphasising the role of culture and tradition in national identity or supporting defence and aerospace development that resonates with Karnataka's industrial strengths, my objective has been consistent: To ensure that the Constituency's voice is heard within the broader policy-making arena. This process has taught me patience; legislative outcomes are rarely immediate and progress often emerges incrementally through coalition and consensus.

> **"I have been mindful that public office is less about individual accomplishment and more about collective continuity. Each initiative contributes to a larger trajectory shaped by predecessors, colleagues, administrators and citizens themselves. My role is to add momentum where possible and to leave behind processes and projects that endure beyond a single term."**

Looking ahead

Looking ahead, I remain conscious that a Parliamentary term is finite and therefore, priorities must be sharply defined. First, I aim to consolidate infrastructure initiatives that directly affect mobility and economic activity — particularly transport and urban planning improvements that enhance Mysuru's status as a growth hub without compromising its character.

Second, strengthening support systems for agriculture — including market access, value addition and technological integration — remains essential for rural stability, especially in Kodagu's plantation economy and surrounding agrarian communities.

Third, I hope to deepen engagement with youth and education. Creating platforms that link skill development with industry exposure, entrepreneurship and cultural literacy is vital for long-term regional competitiveness.

Fourth, heritage and cultural promotion continue to be central commitments — not as symbolic pursuits but as strategic investments in identity, tourism and creative economies.

Finally, institutional responsiveness — ensuring that citizens can navigate governance mechanisms efficiently — is an area where sustained effort can yield durable public trust.

Throughout this journey, I have been mindful that public office is less about individual accomplishment and more about collective continuity.

Each initiative contributes to a larger trajectory shaped by predecessors, colleagues, administrators and citizens themselves. My role is to add momentum where possible and to leave behind processes and projects that endure beyond a single term.

Serving as a Member of Parliament has therefore been both humbling and clarifying. It has reaffirmed that leadership in a democratic framework is measured not by symbolism but by outcomes — by the roads improved, opportunities created, voices amplified and traditions safeguarded.

As I continue this tenure, my focus remains on disciplined service, attentive listening and purposeful execution — ensuring that the trust placed in me translates into progress that the people of Mysuru and Kodagu can tangibly experience.

> **"Serving as a Member of Parliament has been both humbling and clarifying. It has reaffirmed that leadership in a democratic framework is measured not by symbolism but by outcomes — by the roads improved, opportunities created, voices amplified and traditions safeguarded."**

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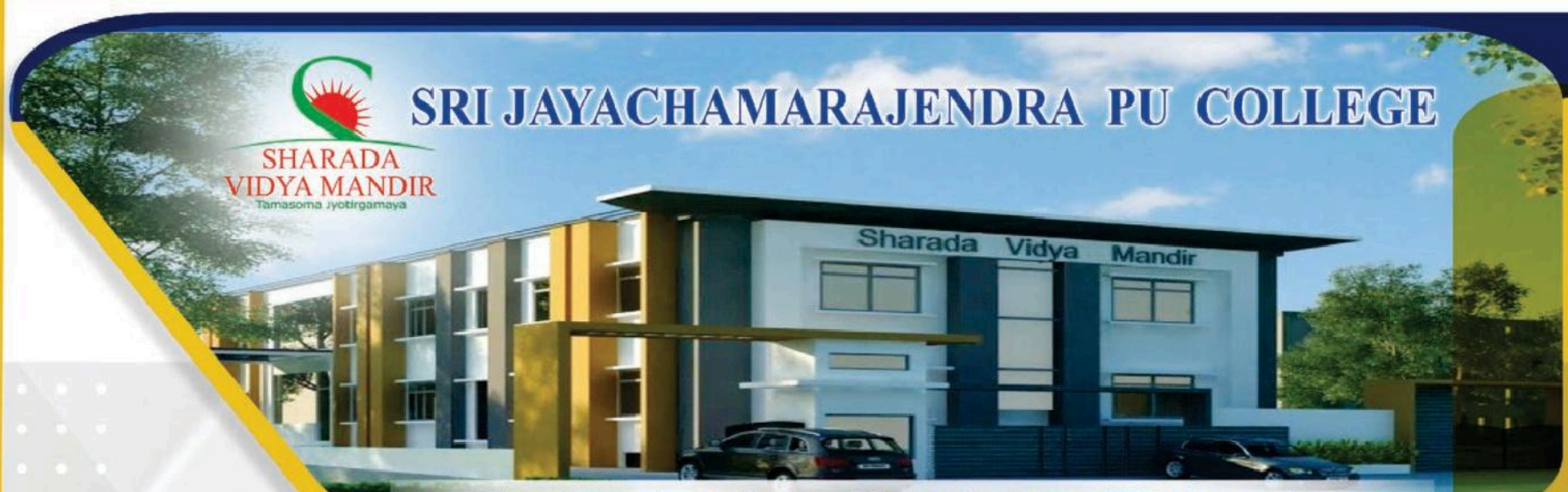

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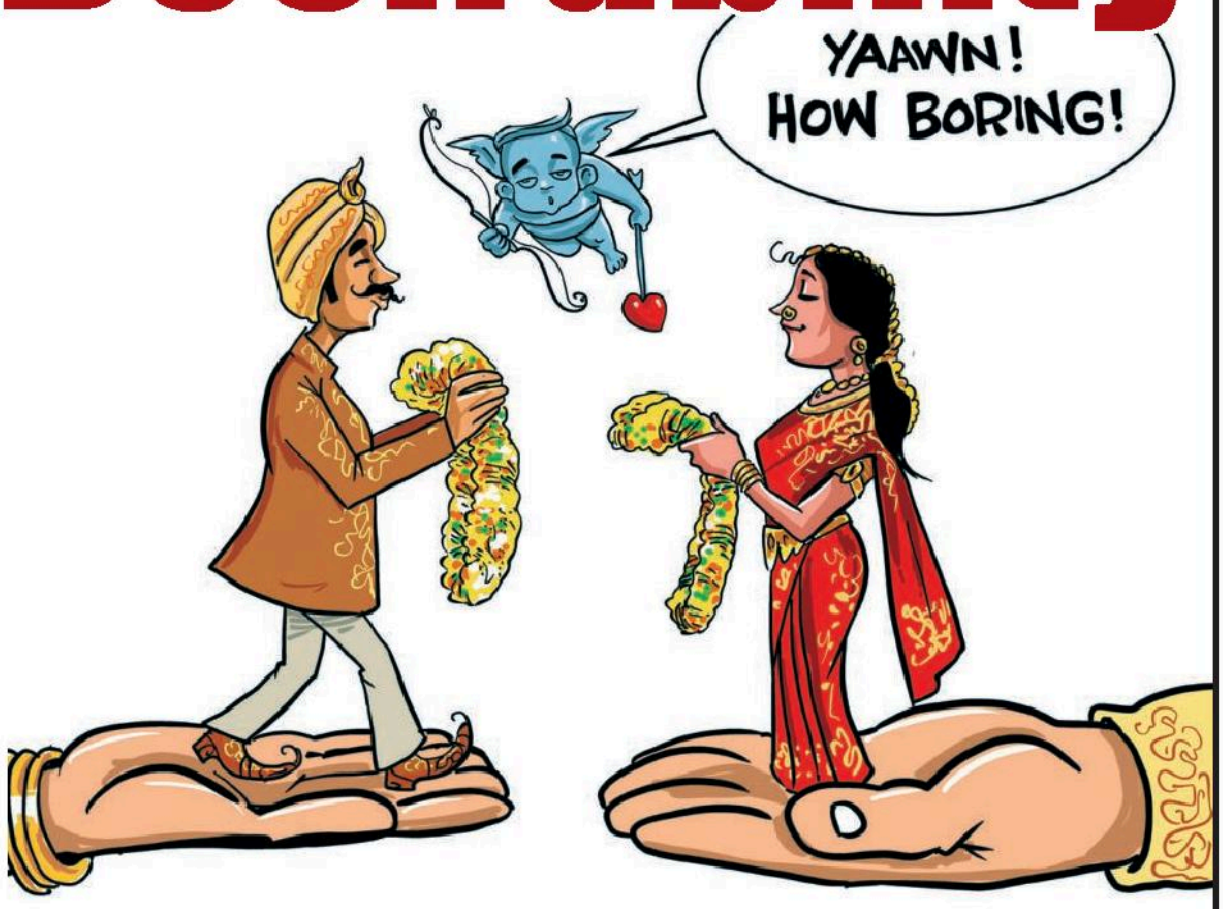
IN BLACK & WHITE

Vikram Muthanna

Modern Romance & Desirability



A young woman recently declared on social media: *"Arranged marriage is glorified in India because it's the only way 70% of men who are creepy, useless and don't know how to talk to women can get a wife."*

The remark offended many. But beneath its provocation lies a cultural discomfort worth examining.

Arranged marriages are not designed around romance. They prioritise family alignment, caste continuity, financial stability and social reputation.

Emotional fluency, flirtation, charm or even grooming are not decisive factors. If a man's education, income, horoscope and background are aligned, the rest is negotiable.

For generations, this structure has insulated Indian men from developing romantic competence. In Urban India, the script for partnership has changed.

Urban Indian women, shaped by financial independence and global exposure, are increasingly seeking emotional companionship, intellectual exchange, healthy physical intimacy, shared domestic responsibility and basic hygiene.

Many Indian men, raised in gender-segregated environments with limited platonic interaction with women struggle in this new marketplace of *'direct courtship.'*

Cinema has not helped either. For decades, mainstream Indian films framed love as a pursuit rather than a partnership.

Movies, even those made recently, show that in romance persistence is rewarded, resistance is romanticised and obsession is masqueraded as devotion.

Meanwhile, streaming platforms expose Indian women to more appealing models of intimacy which are built on consent, dialogue and mutual growth.

Add dating apps to this equation and the rules shift dramatically.

Women now choose directly and this transition has left many urban women dissatisfied with the men in these dating pools.

But the problem is not that Indian men are inherently incapable of romance. It is that many were never required to practise it.

The solution is evolution, not humiliation.

Indian boys must be raised with emotional vocabulary, domestic competence and comfort around women as peers. Mixed-gender socialisation should be normalised.

Romance must revolve around curiosity, empathy and shared growth and not around a sense of conquest.

At the same time, women must temper their dating app-induced expectations. Having thousands of swipes does not entitle one to expect a man from their fantasy or a cinematic hero.

The question is: Will Indian men evolve to meet the expectations of modern romance?

Sadly, they fail in the very first step — conversation. And there is a reason for it.

Unlike many Western societies, India's long-standing discomfort with natural interaction between young men and women has produced an unintended consequence… conversational awkwardness on both sides.

Many Indian men are not merely poor at flirting, they struggle to even begin a simple conversation with a woman.

The Indian women, raised in the same social framework, while claiming to be an *'independent woman,'* often waits for the man to take the initiative.

The result is a social stalemate. Two people interested in each other but neither equipped to bridge the silence gap.

Maybe that's why earlier youngsters found it easier to simply ride their motorcycles up and down a girl's house, revving their motorbikes just enough to signal intent. It was like Morse Code on two wheels.

While the girl appeared at the window, acknowledging the effort with a faint smile.

Luckily, youngsters today do a better job. They have evolved from motorcycle signals to conversation…even if it starts with an unimaginative *"wassup"* on WhatsApp.

All the same, long drawn-out, incommunicado romantic intent seems terribly exhausting. No wonder, many still have arranged marriages. You can skip all the demands of modern romance and head straight to the bedroom for the much-awaited, good old Mummy-Daddy arranged *'first night.'*

What is ironic about arranged marriage is the parents' behaviour. What begins as a conservative arrangement with the expectation of the groom being a good boy *aka* no smoking, no drinking, no girlfriends, virile, etc., and the bride being a good girl *aka* bright, beautiful, fertile and a virgin, etc., the parents then suddenly become liberal and libertine as they are quite happy with their children fornicating after having met just a few times !

They even cheer them on by booking a hotel room, decorating it and even placing a refreshing drink by their bedside !

This *volte-face* from being conservative to shockingly liberal is nothing short of schizophrenia !

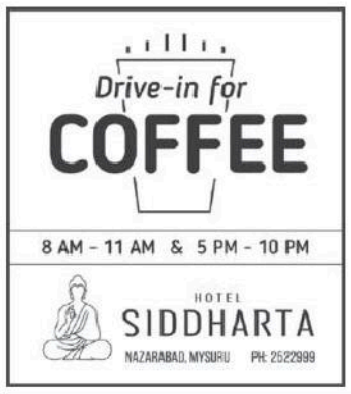
That said, arranged marriage itself need not be discarded. Today, many modern arranged marriages incorporate an element of meaningful courtship before the nuptials that leads to healthy and successful marriages. But the insulation it once provided, mostly to men, is thinning.

The fact remains simple: If you wish to be desired, make yourself desirable. That principle applies equally across genders and both have to evolve.

For those who don't want to evolve, don't worry, you will still get to fornicate and even procreate as Mummy-Daddy, money-caste, obsession with family reputation and status will bridge the evolution gap.

No wonder, 90% of urban Indian marriages are still arranged.

e-mail: vikram@starofmysore.com



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Duct in... Danger

Burning of cables for copper at the base of Varuna Canal aqueduct pillars near Mysuru Tollgate threatens its structural integrity

The base of Varuna Canal Aqueduct, near Old Kesare on city outskirts, filled with waste materials. Picture right shows reinforced steel exposed due to burning of wires at the base of the pillar.

Mysuru, Feb. 16 (RK&BS)- The aqueduct of the Varuna Canal near Old Kesare passing over Mysuru-Bengaluru Highway is facing a serious threat due to the open burning of heaps of waste and cables to extract copper at the base of the pillars supporting the overhead structure.

The Varuna Canal stretches about 126 kms and was constructed over 13 years, from 1987 to 2000. Three major aqueducts, carrying 980 cusecs of water, serve as crucial links in irrigating nearly 80,000 acres of agricultural land.

(See DUCT on page 66)

Anniversary Special Issue

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NOTE: Due to pressure on space, some articles sent by our readers could not be published in this issue. They will be published soon. —**Ed**

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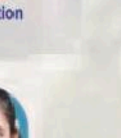

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Prose gone by...

This is the first Anniversary Edition of *Star of Mysore* since the passing of its Founding Editor, **K.B. Ganapathy (KBG),** on July 13, 2025.

As we step into the New Year (2026), we revisit one of KBG's most cherished columns, **'Abracadabra,'** originally published on **Jan. 1, 1979.** He wrote it under his pen name, 'PUCK,' the mischievous and perceptive fairy from Shakespeare's *'A Midsummer Night's Dream,'* a signature style he carried into his column. The piece reproduced below appeared in the first New Year edition after the birth of *Star of Mysore* on Feb. 16, 1978 and stands as a reminder of the voice, vision and vitality that shaped this small evening newspaper, the voice of Mysuru, from its very beginning. **—Ed**

Abracadabra... Abracadabra...

By K.B. Ganapathy

I wish you, my dear readers, all the best, nothing but the best and only the best in... this thing, that thing and in everything that you want, that you need and that you wish from your family, friends and enemies.

Please hold your glasses of whisky, pisky or just plain Cauvery water and offer a toast to this newcomer — 1979.

In the past year of 1978, much spirit had flowed through our belly, destroying in the process, sometimes, the spirit of love and kindness. May this not happen in 1979!

I invoke the spirits of our forebears, who celebrated life with smiles and good cheer and entered the Kingdom of Heaven to bless us from their blessed eternal abode on this day so that the New Year shall flow with a lot of spirit, irrespective of whether Mr. Morarji Desai remains as our Prime Minister or not.

In the past year, I have made more enemies than friends. But they are worthy ones. Acid might have flowed through my pen, but I never dipped my quill in the black ink of malice. But most of the time, my pen oozed with goodwill and love.

> "In the past year, I have made more enemies than friends. But they are worthy ones. Acid might have flowed through my pen, but I never dipped my quill in the black ink of malice. But most of the time, my pen oozed with goodwill and love."

Machiavelli, in his *'The Prince,'* noted: "A man who wishes to make the profession of goodness in everything must necessarily come to grief among so many who are not good." The same is my predicament.

In the past year (1978), apart from many minor irritations and a few major nuisances caused by this column to some individuals, organisations and groups of people, there were two instances which had disturbing, though healthy, after-effects which I shall presently relate.

The first was the *'Man-Eaters of Coorg'* write-up. It had roused the ire of many Coorgs and kicked up a lot of dust.

A few of them wrote to us singing the praise of the brave sons of the 'Switzerland of India' and some agreed with me.

A couple of these letters were published. Others were for my personal consumption.

A Kannada daily, *Kodagu Dainika,* literally translated my 'dressing-down' for the benefit of those Coorgs who were misguided.

Later, one 'K', C/o *Kodagu Dainika,* wrote a tirade against me, challenging me to reveal my identity and offering to enlighten me on the issue.

I love to carry on with my good work incognito! But the silliest thing to happen was the cancellation of subscription to *Star of Mysore* by some Coorgs.

The second instance was when I wrote about the local Police Training Institute.

A dozen calls from the Department's Officers and men came, some demanding proof (even though I wrote that no proof was possible at all!), others threatening court action with a veiled threat of arrest.

My family and friends were anxious and even looked unhappy. Thank God, 1978 had been kind to me, unlike Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who, refusing to bend before the country's 'highest court', the Parliament, finally had to bend before the giant jail gate to enter the trap-door!

Now, dear readers, with all humility, I seek your best wishes and blessings for the year 1979. **—PUCK**

[Monday 1st January, 1979]

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VOICE OF THE READER

Chamundi Hill needs long-term cleanliness and protection

Sir,

With reference to the news item published in *Star of Mysore* dated Feb.1 regarding the clearing of 600 kg of dry waste during the Chamundi foothill plogging drive, I wish to appreciate the commendable efforts of Mysuru City Corporation, volunteers and all stakeholders involved in keeping this sacred Hill clean.

While such cleaning drives are laudable, cleaning alone will not put an end to the recurring problem of littering. Certain strict and sustained measures are required to ensure long-term cleanliness and protection of the Hill. Measures such as a strict ban on the use of banned plastic covers by vendors at the top of the Hill, prohibiting food items carried in plastic covers, restricting plastic and food items at the entrance of the steps and roads leading to the Hill, installation of prominent awareness and display boards and imposing fines for littering will go a long way in preventing waste accumulation.

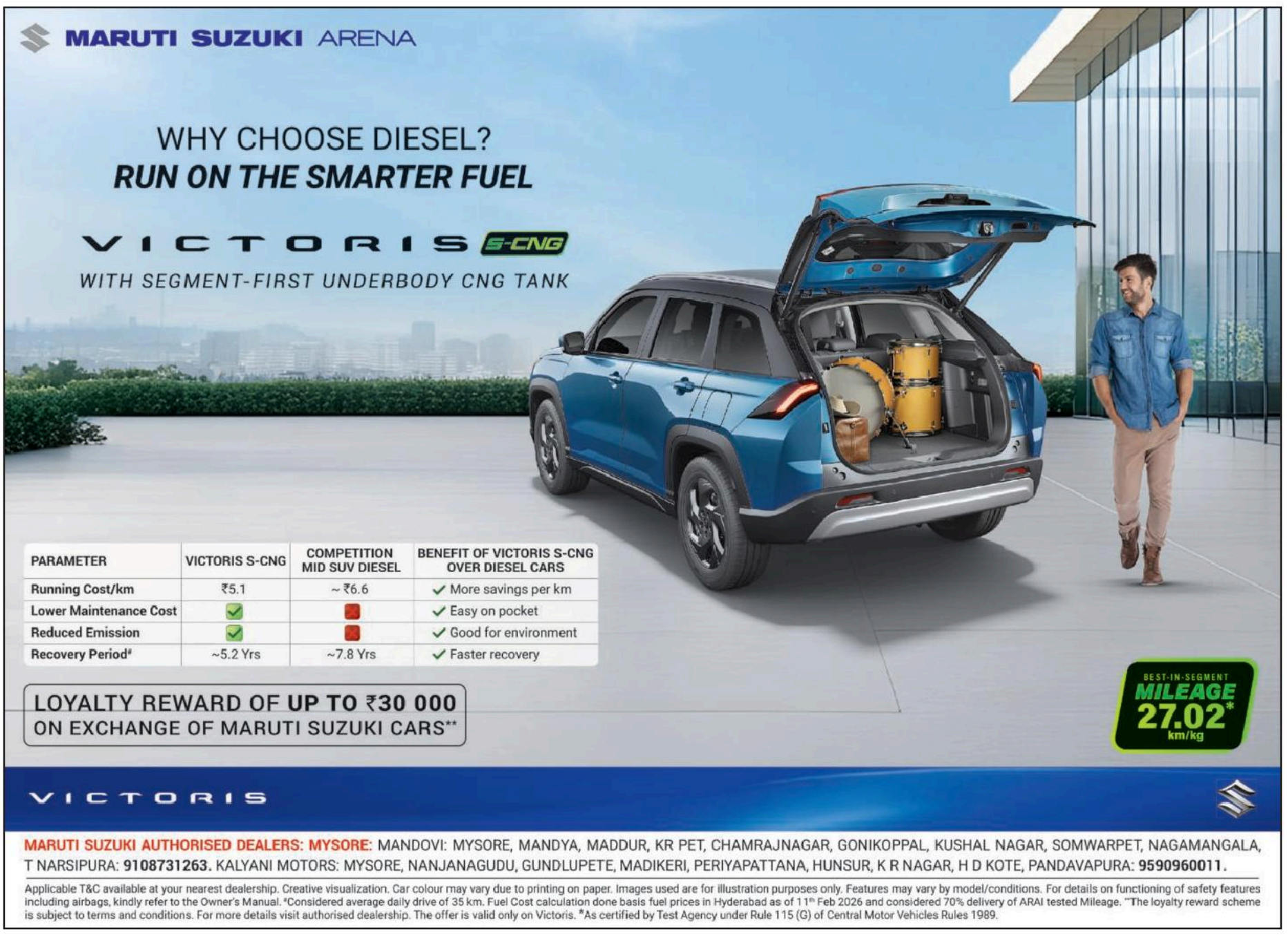
A similar effective initiative has already been successfully implemented at Mysuru Zoo, where strict regulation, awareness & enforcement have resulted in a cleaner & more disciplined environment. Adopting such a model at Hill will help preserve its ecological and spiritual significance.

Chamundi Hill is not just a tourist destination but a place of faith, heritage and pride for Mysureans. It therefore deserves continuous protection through firm policy decisions, strict enforcement and public cooperation, rather than periodic clean-up drives. The authorities may also seek help from industries to deploy guards and support enforcement, which could be taken up as a CSR initiative.

Such collective efforts will ensure that this natural and cultural treasure is preserved for future generations.

—Pradeep Mysore Rajshekar

Mysuru 12.2.2026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City's vanishing tower clocks

By Maya Sitaram

Have we ever wondered what would have happened to Cinderella if the clock tower near the King's Palace had not struck 12 and warned her of the time when the magic transformations would vamoose?

The Fairy Godmother's array of blessings — a ball gown, pumpkin carriage, and glass slippers for Cinderella — did not include a time-keeping device, but only a stricture to heed a specified time. Obviously, the Godmother knew of the existence of the clock tower in town, a functioning one at that.

The folk fable of Cinderella was first published in 1697. However, clock towers have been the life-centre of towns for aeons. With time taking its toll, some of them have forgotten to chime and strike at regular intervals.

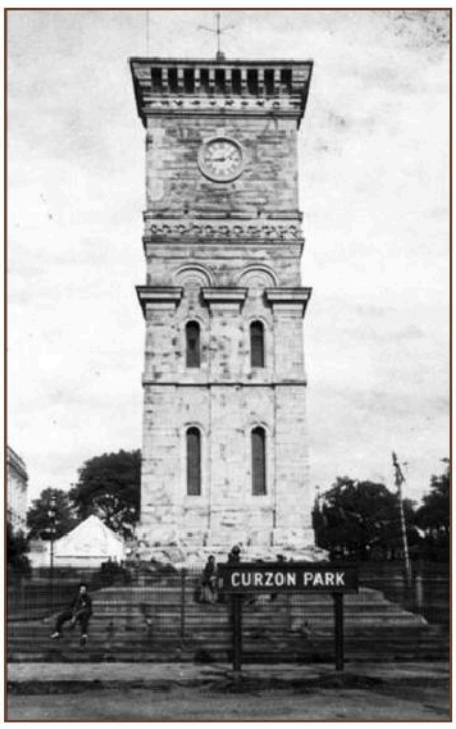
Because of their imposing, artistically designed structures, they continue to hold pivotal positions, especially in cities with ancient history and rich culture. Each of them has a story to tell.

Back in time

Before the big clock towers loomed over, time was measured in many ways in the heritage city of Mysuru.

Striking the gong, booming of a gun, turning the lights on and off, and the beating of the drums at the Palace were some of the ways the erstwhile rulers ensured that time was seen and heard by everyone. Most people could not afford pocket watches, which were more of a status symbol.

The Palace, treasury, houses of Aliyandar Krishne Urs and Devaparthiva (son-in-law and grandson of Mummadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar), Attaara Kacheri, Parakala Matha, and cow sheds were places where the gong resonated every hour, as noted by the renowned musician of yesteryears, Vasudevacharya.



THEN: *Dodda Gadiyara without dome.*

NOW: *Dodda Gadiyara with Rajasthani dome*

At 12 noon, a gun would boom from Gun House located near Southern Gate of Palace. The sound could be heard even in bazaar areas. Guns boomed at 5 am, 12 noon, and 9 pm, indicating the three time zones of waking up, mid-break, and end of the day, and this in some way ensured a cohesive community lifestyle.

Lighting at 6 pm called "lights up" and switching off for a split second in streets and houses were also indicators of time. Those who grew up in that era say that this was a signal for the children to close their books and go to bed — a far cry from the cyber-driven practices followed by the Gen Z.

Ticking through history: The Clock Towers of Mysuru

Mysuru has seen quite a few *gadiyara* (clock) towers. Some take centre stage, a few are unseen, a few have bitten the dust, and some new ones have sprouted up. Traversing Mysuru, one comes across two visible landmark heritage clock towers, colloquially referred to as *Dodda* (big) and *Chikka* (small) *Gadiyaras,* which stand majestic as proof of time gone by.

Dodda Gadiyara

The clock strike from Dodda Gadiyara, located near the King's Palace, old Mysoreans say, was heard for around two kilometres or more during night-time.

It was on Aug. 8, 1927 that the tower was declared the Silver Jubilee Clock Tower, commemorating the completion of 25 years of the reign of Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV. On the day of the inauguration, when the King put the clock into action, it struck 25 times. The clock tower will soon be 100 years old, yet in the hustle and bustle of city life, passers-by overlook its presence.

Originally 50 feet in height, the tower was partially dismantled and newly constructed, and the height was increased by adding a Rajasthani dome.

The tower has imbibed the Indo-Saracenic architectural style. A winding teakwood staircase built inside the tower and a balustrade at the apex around the clock, allowing six to eight persons to stand, are among the diligent measures taken to ensure access for maintenance and repairs.

Not many are aware that the clock tower was contributed by Palace staff as a token of "loyalty and devotion by all in service of the Palace, with a fervent prayer that under Divine Providence His Highness may be blessed with long life and his reign rendered radiantly happy, memorable and prosperous" (T.P. Issar, *Mysore the Royal City*).

Archival records show that a subscription amount of Rs. 5,821.50 was collected by 18 departments of the Palace towards the Silver Jubilee Fund, up to May 13, 1927. Time has taken its toll on the tower. Of late, cracks developed in the structure, causing concern. Some said the bell, weighing 920 kilograms, and its chiming sound were the culprits.

A committee constituted in 2005 did not agree and instead advocated restoration.

There was also an issue of theft in 2021 of the copper grounding rod; experts stress the need to address it as soon as possible, especially given the increased height.

[Continued on Page - 60]

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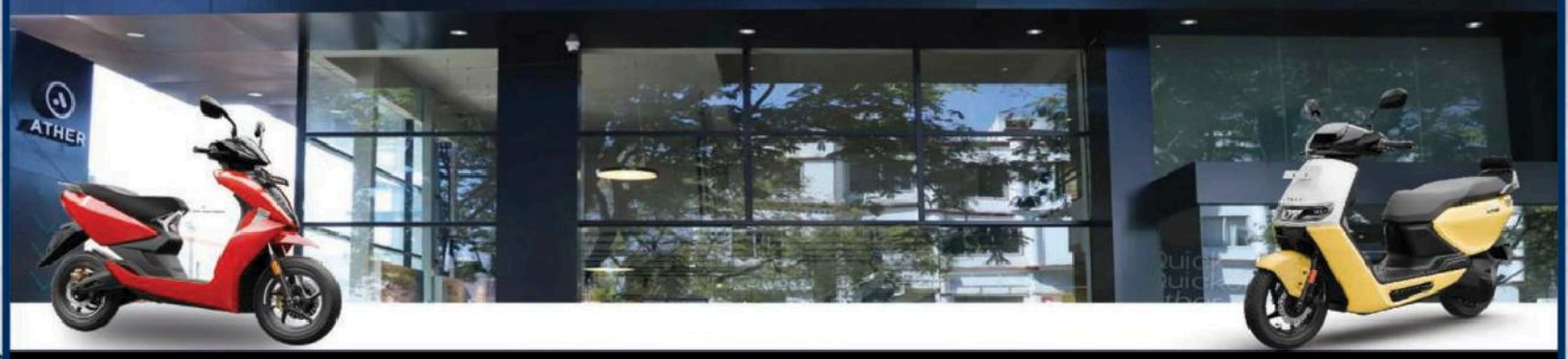

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FLEETING THOUGHTS

By K.G. Mathew, Principal, Excel Public School, Mysuru

Screens & Teens: Is it too much & too early?

On Dec. 10, 2025, the Australian Government enforced a new rule restricting access to social media for children below 16 years. This move has sparked worldwide concern about screen habits of teenagers and their potential harms.

In our country too, we have been witnessing noticeable changes in behavioural patterns of youngsters, attributable, at least in part, to their digital habits. The time has come to talk about the "digital diet" for our children.

While the adverse impact of excessive screen time on the physical, social and emotional health of youngsters is now well recognised, its implications for intellectual growth demand far greater attention.

The developing brain under digital pressure

Research links reduced attention span, weak self-control, heightened impulsivity and an unhealthy craving for instant gratification to prolonged screen exposure. Adolescence is a critical phase of brain development and disruptions at this stage can carry lifelong consequences.

Compounding this concern is the growing over-dependence on generative AI tools to ease academic tasks, leading to the underutilisation of natural cognitive abilities and diminished cognitive engagement.

Studies have also proved that constant notifications limit concentration, training the brain toward a shorter attention span and shallow engagement.

Terms such as 'brain rot' and 'brain fog', though not recognised as medical diagnoses, reflect a growing anxiety about declining mental stamina, originality and problem-solving capacity among young learners.

Beyond cognition, the most visible consequence of excessive screen exposure is the social disconnect caused by digital over-connectivity. Weakened interpersonal skills, emotional instability and unrealistic social comparisons foster a misplaced sense of validation rooted in curated online realities.

With shrinking time for physical activity and sleep, many children experience heightened stress, anxiety and emotional fatigue. Ironically, many youngsters report feeling lonelier in an increasingly connected world.

Chronic sleep deprivation further manifests in irritability, mood instability and emotional burnout, while sedentary lifestyles contribute to obesity, reduced muscle tone and declining cardiovascular health.

Paediatricians worldwide warn that we may be nurturing a generation that is physically and emotionally less healthy than the one before it.

When the virtual world crosses ethical & legal limits

Another area of grave concern is the irresponsible use of social media, often crossing ethical and legal boundaries. The anonymity of digital space emboldens behaviours that would rarely surface in real-life interactions.

Educational institutions and the administrative machinery must devote greater attention to sensitising youngsters that online actions, including sharing explicit images, defamatory content or misusing digital identities, carry legal consequences.

It's a shared responsibility

The responsibility of addressing this challenge rests collectively with parents, schools and society at large. While outright bans may offer temporary relief, sustainable solutions lie in guided exposure, open dialogue and the deliberate cultivation of self-regulation.

Device-free routines, responsible digital modelling by adults and ensuring that screens do not replace sleep, outdoor play or family interaction are essential.

While completely screen-free homes may be unrealistic, creating screen-wise and screen-safe environments is possible and necessary. Parents must reclaim their role as mindful gatekeepers rather than passive observers, while schools must integrate digital literacy and ethical technology use into their educational frameworks.

Technology, in itself, is neither the villain nor the saviour of this generation; it is a powerful tool whose impact depends on how wisely it is used. The challenge before us is not to resist digital progress, but to humanise it. Failure to act with foresight risks raising a generation that is hyper-connected yet emotionally fragile and informed yet intellectually undernourished.

Let us practise and encourage the use of technology with intention, not addiction, choosing real connections, healthy routines and mindful limits, for a safer and more promising future for our young generation.

Make your child a Global Citizen!

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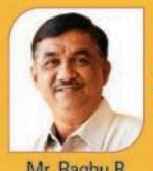

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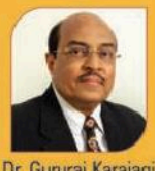

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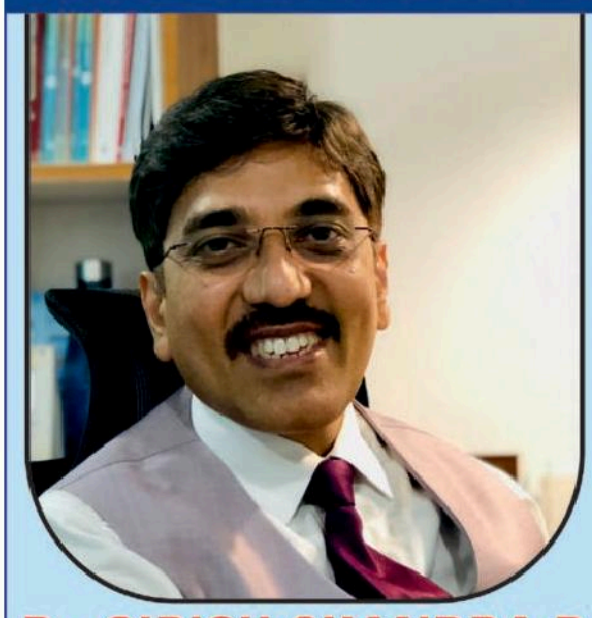

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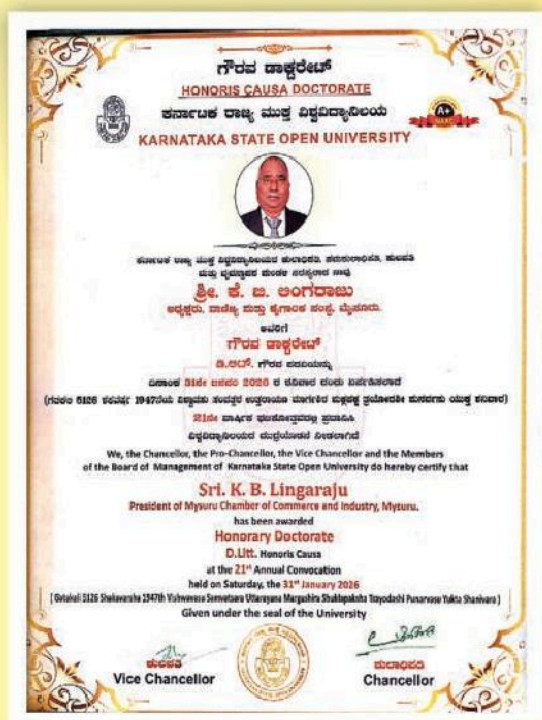
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ದಿನಾಂಕ 31ನೇ ಜನವರಿ 2026 ರ ಶನಿವಾರ ಏರ್ಪಡಿಸಿರುವ
We, the Chancellor, the Pro-Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor and the Members
of the Board of Management of Karnataka State Open University do hereby certify that
Sri. K. B. Lingaraju
President of Mysuru Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mysuru.
has been awarded
Honorary Doctorate
D.Litt. Honoris Causa
at the 21st Annual Convocation
held on Saturday, the 31st January 2026
Given under the seal of the University
Vice Chancellor
Chancellor

Dr. K.B. LINGARAJU

President, Mysore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mysuru has been awarded

Honorary Doctorate
D.Litt. Honoris Causa

at the **21st Annual Convocation**
held on Saturday,
the **31st January 2026** at
Karnataka State Open University, Mysuru

Dr. K.B.L vows for industrial development

Dr. K.B. Lingaraju's Profile :

K.B. Lingaraju is a Post Graduate from the University of Mysore, with GDC from Mysore Co-operative Union. He has been elected as the President of Mysore Chamber of Commerce & Industries at its General Body meeting. He was born and brought up in a political and agriculture background family. His father Byrappa and mother Lakshmamma are running a factory in the name of "**Kiran Industry**" manufacturing barbed wires and chain link. Mr. K.B. Lingaraju has served in the Executive Committee of Mysore Chamber of Commerce & Industries for over 15 years. He is also a member of Cassia and FJCC in Bangalore. He has also served as a Secretary of KIADB Manufacturers Union.

Proud moment of receiving Kannada Rajyotsava Award on the occasion of 70th District Kannada Rajyotsava Celebration held on 1st Nov 2025 at University Oval Grounds, Mysore.

K.B. Lingaraju, President of Mysore Chamber of Commerce and Industries who firmly believes that when industries grow at macro level, unemployment could be eradicated.

He also feels that the Government must provide adequate facilities to entrepreneurs. He is constantly working to that direction. He believes that small and medium scale industries are the pillars of the country. He emphasises that small industries should grow in line with large industries. He says that Mysore is a very important district as far as industries are concerned.

He is bringing to the notice of the Government and other concerned authorities about the availability of opportunities within the District for Industrial Development.

He is also constantly working for removal of bottlenecks pertaining to infrastructure. He is extending co-operation and also guiding new entrepreneurs.

After becoming the President of Mysore Chamber of Commerce and Industries, he has further extended his service areas to nearby districts also.

He is constantly submitting memorandums to concerned minister, MLAs and officers for providing at least street lights, water, road, toilets etc., to these industrial areas which are lacking for the last several years. He says that the dream of setting up Mysore Industrial Town Authority has not been made a reality even after two decades.

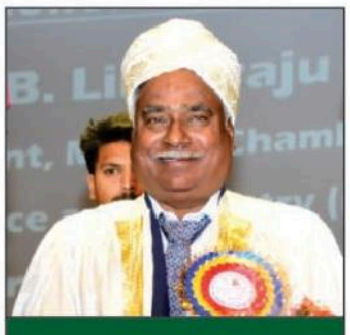
More development if the Government supports:

Mr. K.B. Lingaraju says that packaging industry is doing well in Mysuru and box, wire, tyre factories besides engineering industries, which are located in Hebbal, Metagalli, Yadavagiri, Koorgalli, Hootagalli were doing tremendous job.

He says at the same time, officers should work with willingness commitment and dedication, he added and urged the authorities to provide all facilities.

K.B. Lingaraju is very enthusiastic in providing support to Mysuru's over all Industrial Development.

—Promotional Feature



Being the president of Mysore Chamber of Commerce & Industry Dr. K.B. Lingaraju's contribution for the development of Mysuru Industrial Sector is remarkably impressive

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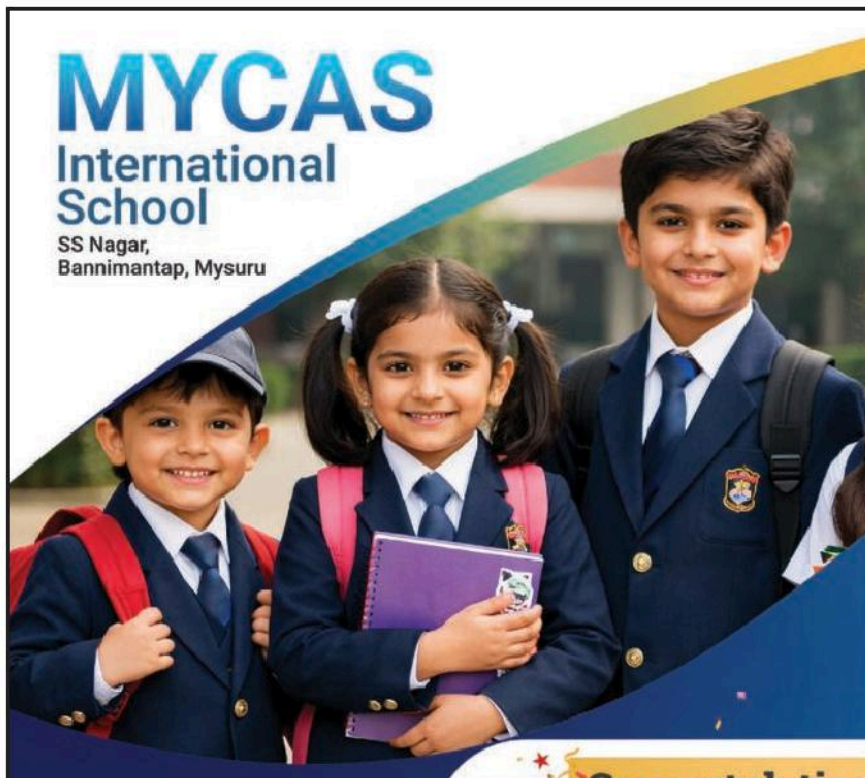

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Return of the... Mahseer

A 40-kg humpback Mahseer that was caught by C.P. Aiyappa.

A conservation story from River Cauvery

By B.C. Thimmaiah

In 2018, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classified the Orange-Finned or Humpback Mahseer as 'Critically Endangered.'

Yet, in the protected stretches of the River Cauvery in Kodagu, the species is found in abundance, thanks to the efforts of Coorg Wildlife Society (CWS) and the family of Chendanda S. Ponnappa and his son Chendanda P. Aiyappa. Mahseer conservation in Cauvery has a history that goes back nearly four decades. It began in 1985, when Ponnappa, a member of CWS, asserted at a meeting that Mahseer still thrived in the Cauvery at Dubare and Valnoor.

At the time, doubts were raised about the fish's presence in the river. To settle the debate, Ponnappa landed a 44-kg Mahseer in July 1985 at Valnoor, conclusively proving that the iconic fish — known locally as 'Bommeen' or 'Boltha Meen' in Kodava Thakk and 'Bilimeenu' in Kannada — was very much alive in the river. The Cauvery is home to Golden, Silver and Black Mahseer.

[Continued on Page - 52]

The river watchers who keep an eye on illegal fishing and other activities that are detrimental to Mahseer conservation.

Best wishes to STAR OF MYSORE on the occasion of 49th Anniversary

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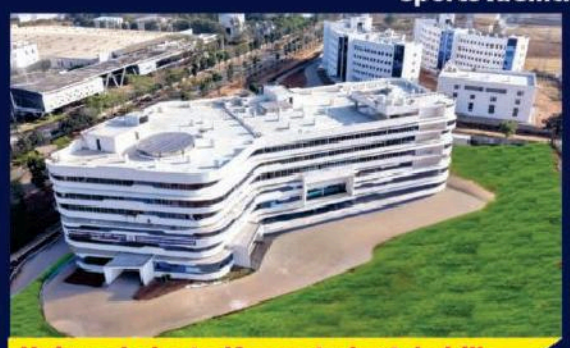

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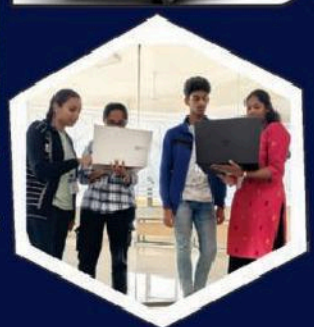

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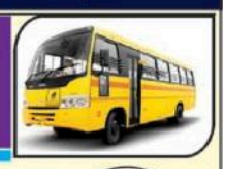

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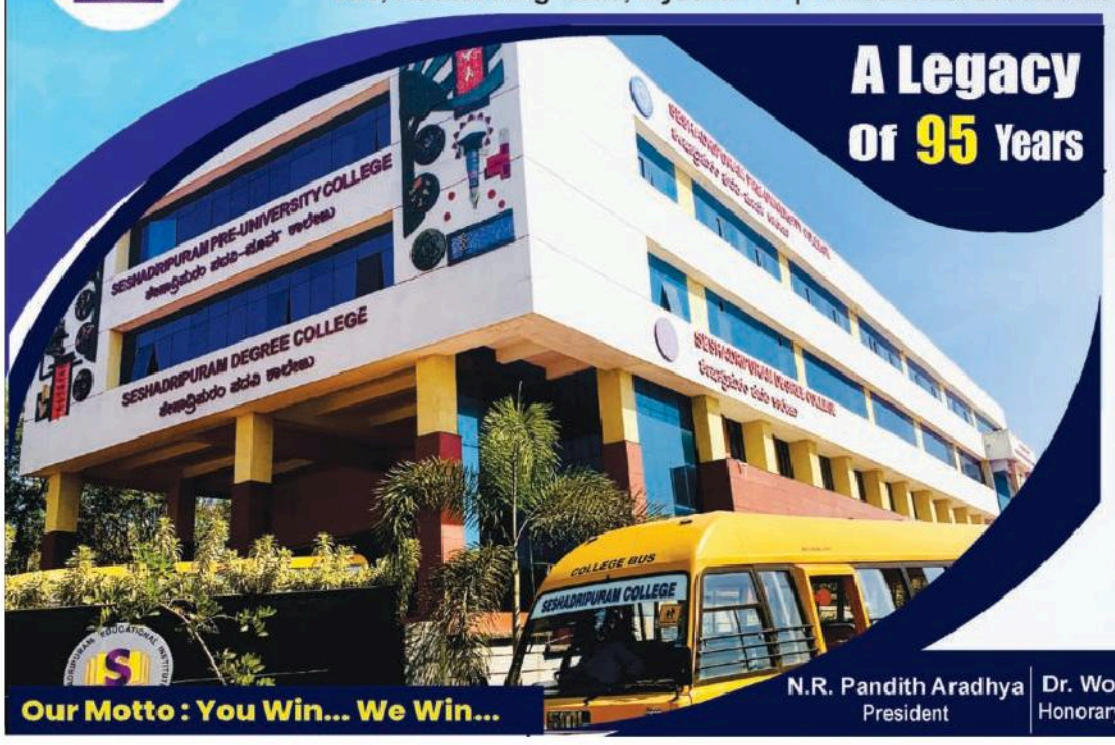

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Granite Guardian of Mysuru

Chamundi Hill

By Gouri Satya

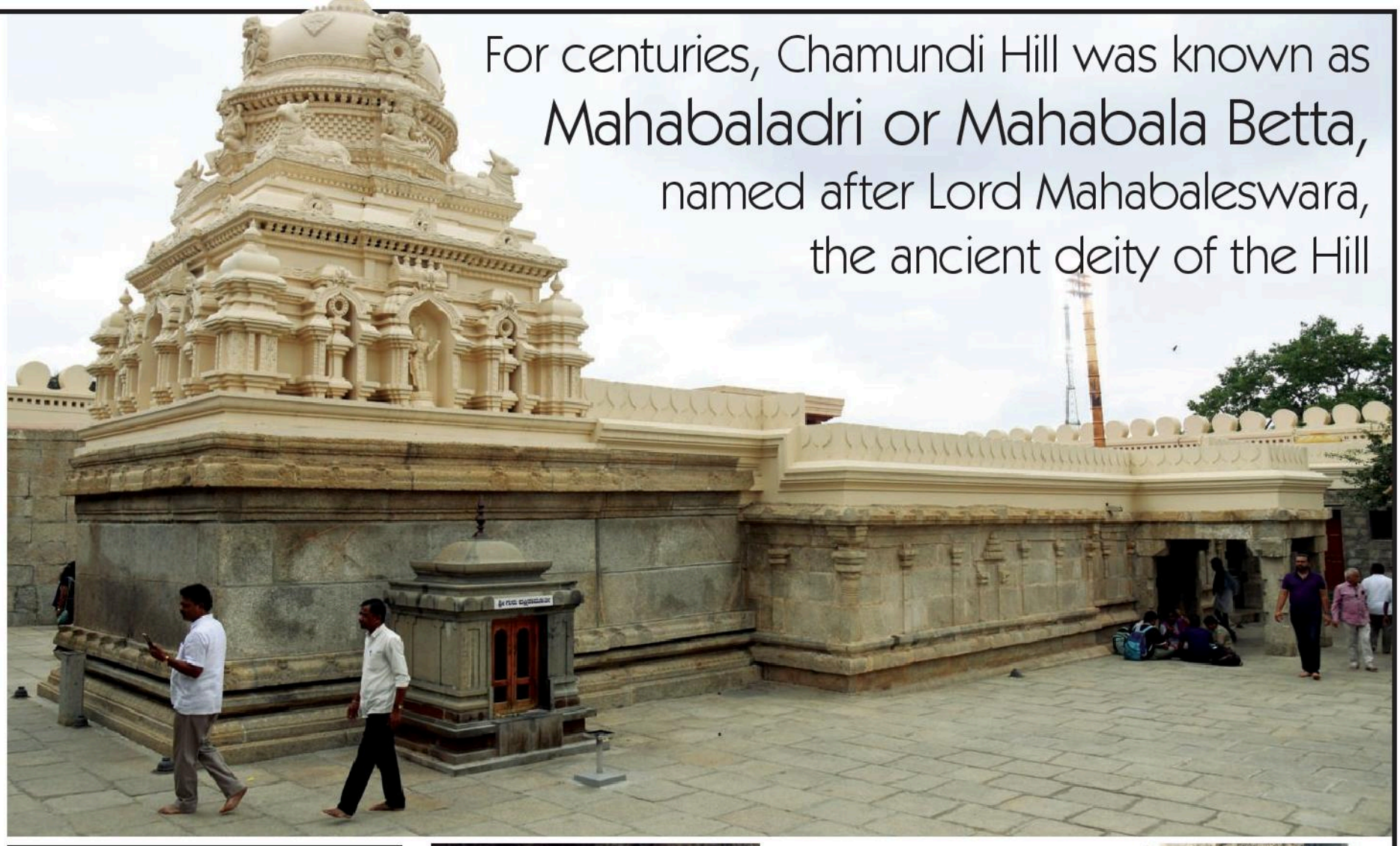
For over eight centuries, the silhouette of Chamundi Hill has defined the horizon of Mysuru. To the casual tourist, it is a scenic viewpoint and a place of temples and the demon's statue; to the devotee, it is the sacred abode of the Divine Mother Chamundeshwari; and to the historian, it is a stone library detailing the rise and fall of dynasties.

Standing 1,063 metres above sea level, this 800-million-year-old geological formation is the crowning beauty of the South-East Mysuru. Yet today, this ancient sentinel is at a crossroads.

As urban sprawl climbs its slopes and concrete replaces its canopy, the Hill finds itself caught between the demands of modern tourism and the desperate need for ecological preservation.

The conversion of Chamundi Hill into a commercial hub poses not only a threat to its sanctity but also to its physical stability.

[Continued on Page - 27]



For centuries, Chamundi Hill was known as **Mahabaladri or Mahabala Betta,** named after Lord Mahabaleswara, the ancient deity of the Hill

[Continued from Page - 26]

Geological & Mythological Foundation

The story of Chamundi Hill begins from a geological perspective. It is part of some of the oldest rock formations. For millions of years, it has stood silently, watching the city below expand.

In the local imagination, however, the Hill is born of myth. The epic battle between Goddess Chamundeshwari and the buffalo-demon Mahishasura and the victory of light over darkness is recalled during Dasara.

For centuries, the Hill was known as Mahabaladri or Mahabala Betta, named after Lord Mahabaleswara, the ancient deity of the Hill.

It is a historical irony that while the Mahabaleswara Temple remains the oldest structure on the Hill, it now sits in the shadow of the more prominent Chamundeshwari Temple, attracting only a few of the thousands who visit daily.

The Epigraphic Record

To understand the significance of the Hill, one must look at the inscriptions recorded there. The earliest fragmented record, dating back to 950 A.D., takes us back to the Ganga Dynasty.

Then comes the transition of the name in an inscription from 1127 A.D., during the reign of the legendary Hoysala King Vishnuvardhana. His inscription refers to the site as "Marballa Thirtha of Maisunadu."

Nearly a century later, in 1211 A.D., the Hoysala King Vira Ballala referred to it as "Marbalesvara." Nowhere in these early medieval records does the name "Chamundi" appear. The Hill was a centre of Shaivism (the worship of Shiva) long before it became the preeminent seat of Shaktism (the worship of the Goddess).

The rise of the Goddess is inextricably linked to the rise of the Wadiyars. As the family consolidated power in the 14th and 15th centuries, they adopted Chamundeshwari as their tutelary deity.

What was once a small Hilltop shrine began to transform into a grand complex, reflecting the growing prestige of the Mysore State of the Royals.

[Continued on Page - 42]

The pillar** (left side of the temple) **of Mahabaleswara Temple atop Chamundi Hill where the inscription is found. The inscription on this pillar relates to the courtesan. She donated money probably for the carving and erecting the pillar in the Mantap in 1627. The dance posture carving on the pillar shows that she was a dancer.

Thus spake 2 pillars after 4 centuries...

The two stone pillars in the oldest temple atop the Chamundi Hill — the Mahabaleswara Temple — reveal interesting details while standing mute for four centuries. The Northern-side stone pillar at the entrance of the Mantapa has a relief of two dancers. The inscription above this dancing figure says that Mayidevi is the courtesan or Patra of God Mahabaleswara of the Hill and her daughter Nagasambu had this pillar erected by donating three-and-a-half 'gadyanas' or gold coins on Nov. 28, 1627.

The inscription also indicates that this is the third pillar erected at the four-pillared entrance porch. Of the two figures, probably the right one is of Mayidevi, the courtesan of the God Mahabaleswara, dancing to the beat of the drum being played by the musician standing next to her. It is interesting to note that this temple had the practice of having courtesans in the 17th century.

The opposite pillar also narrates that this one was erected by Mayappa, son of Mayaguru, of Darasivala, on the same date as the Northern-side pillar, by gifting three 'gadyanas'. Probably, the carving on the pillar shows the donor with his wife and child.

The date of the inscription clearly proves that this four-pillared entrance porch of the Mahabaleswara Temple was constructed in the early 17th century, post-Vijayanagar period — the third stage of its development after the Gangas and the Hoysalas and in all probability some of the chiefs of these dynasties, including Cholas, visited this ancient temple.

The opposite pillar** (right side of the Mahabaleswara Temple) **also narrates that this one was erected by Mayappa by gifting three 'gadyanas.' Probably, the carving on the pillar shows the donor with his wife and child.

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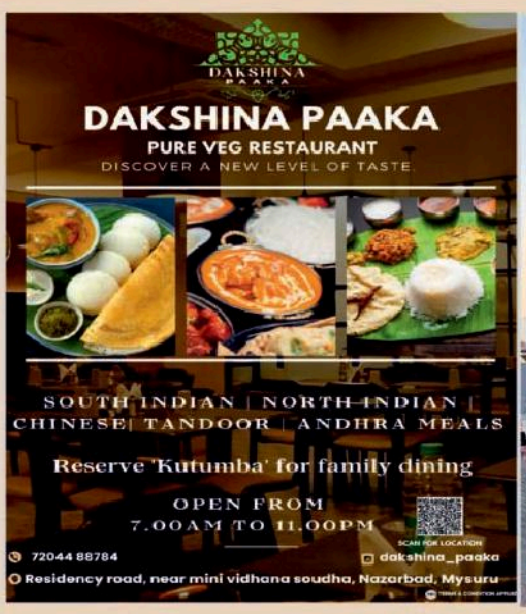
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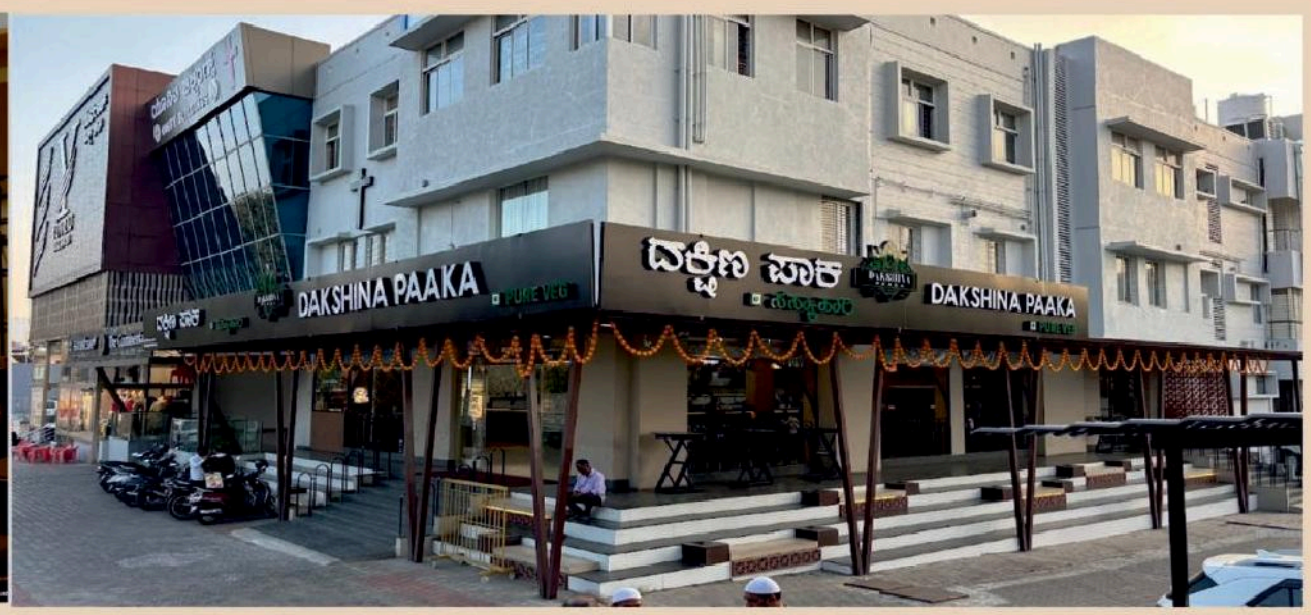

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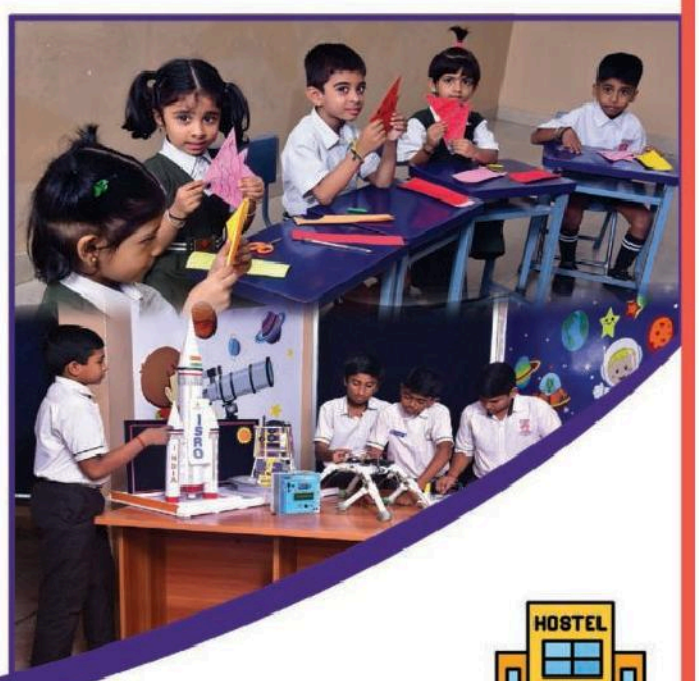

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Betel Mania

[Pics. by M.N. Lakshminarayana Yadav]

Udbur's thriving betel leaf market

Of the Farmers By the Farmers & For the Farmers

By B. Sreekantswamy

Rapid urbanisation has pushed the eponymous *Mysore Veelyadele* — Mysore betel leaf — to the margins in many parts of Mysuru district. But in Udbur, a small village barely 12 kms from the heart of Mysuru city, the leaf continues to thrive, rooted firmly in soil, tradition and community pride.

Located on Udbur-Hullahalli Road, off the Mysuru-H.D. Kote Road, this village has quietly held on to a legacy that once enjoyed royal patronage. What sets Udbur apart is not just the cultivation of the GI-tagged *Mysore Veelyadele,* but the fact that its farmers have built and sustained their own wholesale market, something rare in today's ecosystem.

A market is born

At the centre of the village stands the **Sri Lakshminarayana Swamy Veelyadele Santhe,** an exclusive market for *Mysore Veelyadele*. Unlike most farming communities that depend on town markets, the growers of Udbur took matters into their own hands, creating a space dedicated solely to auctioning their produce.

The market operates every single day of the year, including Sundays, from 4 pm to 5 pm — just one hour, but one that determines the day's fortunes for hundreds of farmers.

It is the only such exclusive *Veelyadele* auction market in the State. While Channapatna in Bengaluru South district (earlier Ramanagara) also hosts a betel leaf market, it convenes only twice a week. Beyond Karnataka, Tamil Nadu is the next major destination for *Mysore Veelyadele*. Hundreds of acres in and around Udbur are under betel leaf cultivation. Most farmers reserve 10 to 20 guntas of their land for *Veelyadele,* growing it alongside other crops. With a ready market at their doorstep, worries about marketing are minimal — though the challenges of cultivation remain plenty.

[Continued on Page - 48]

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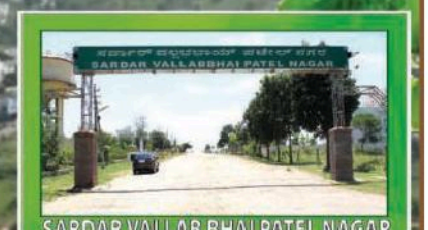

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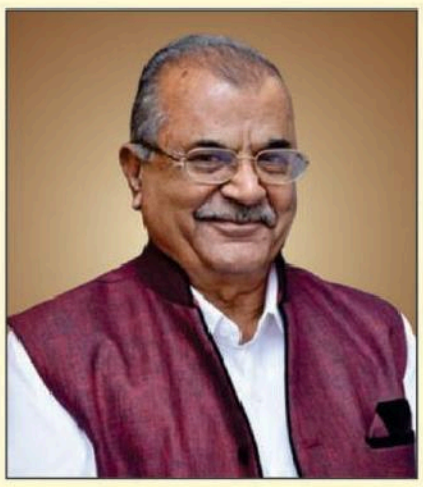
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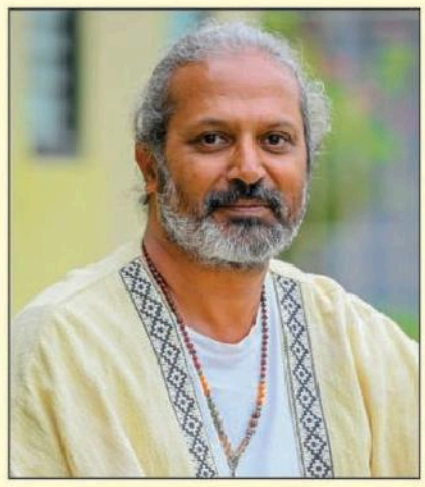
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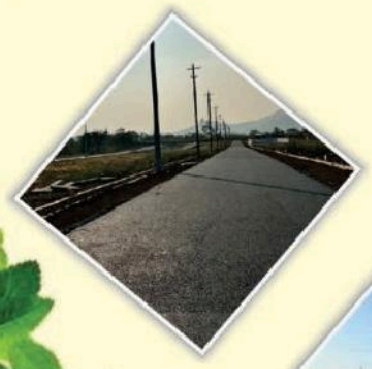

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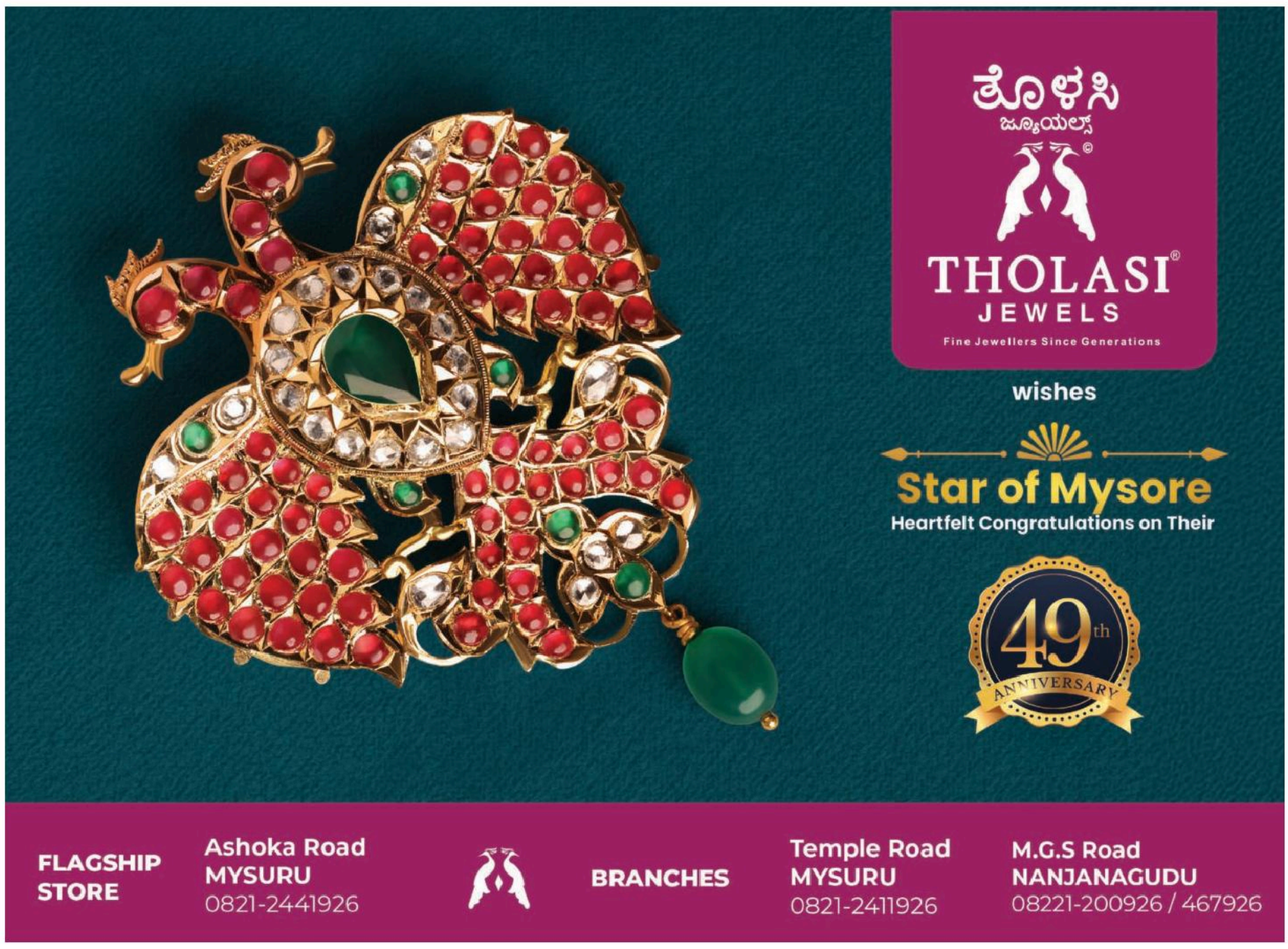
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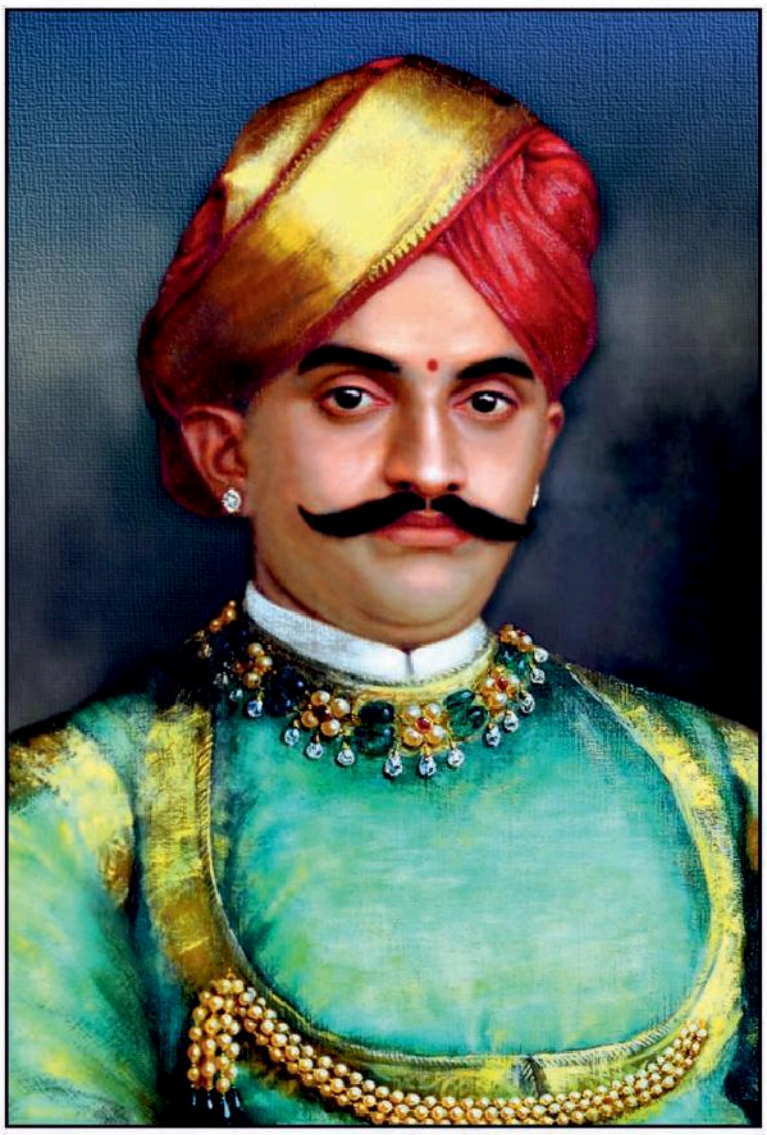

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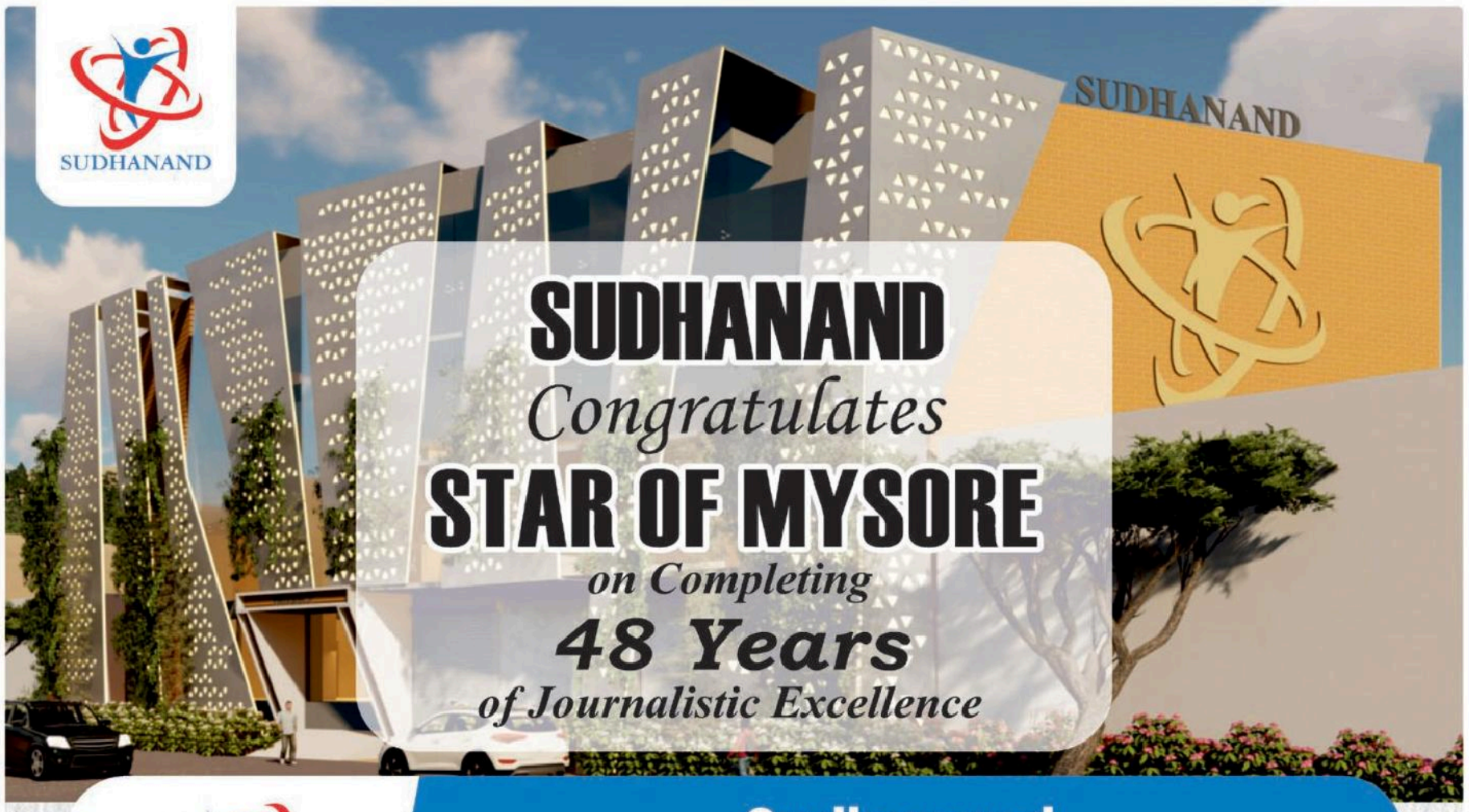

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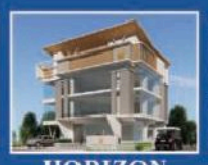

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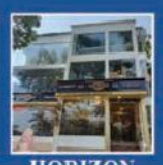

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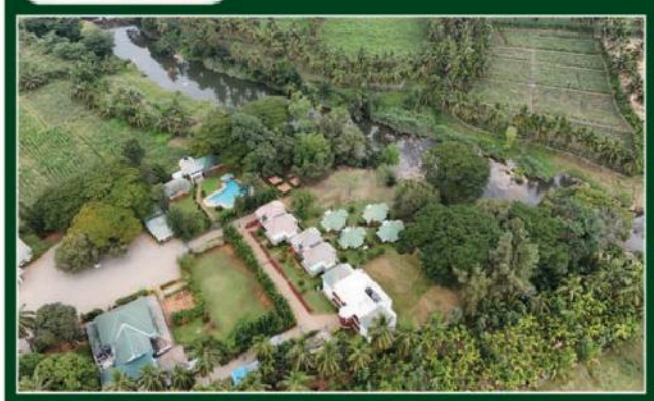

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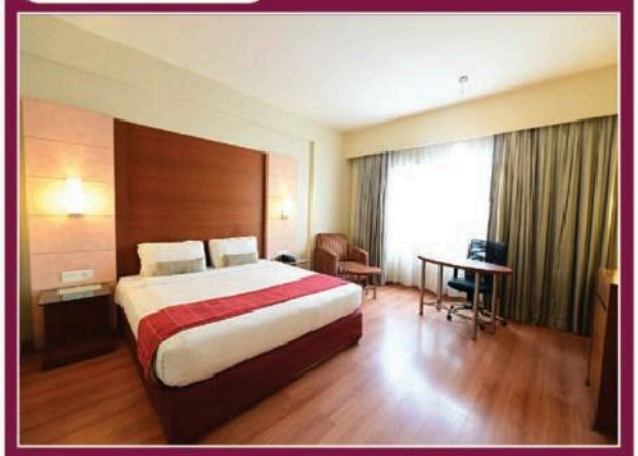

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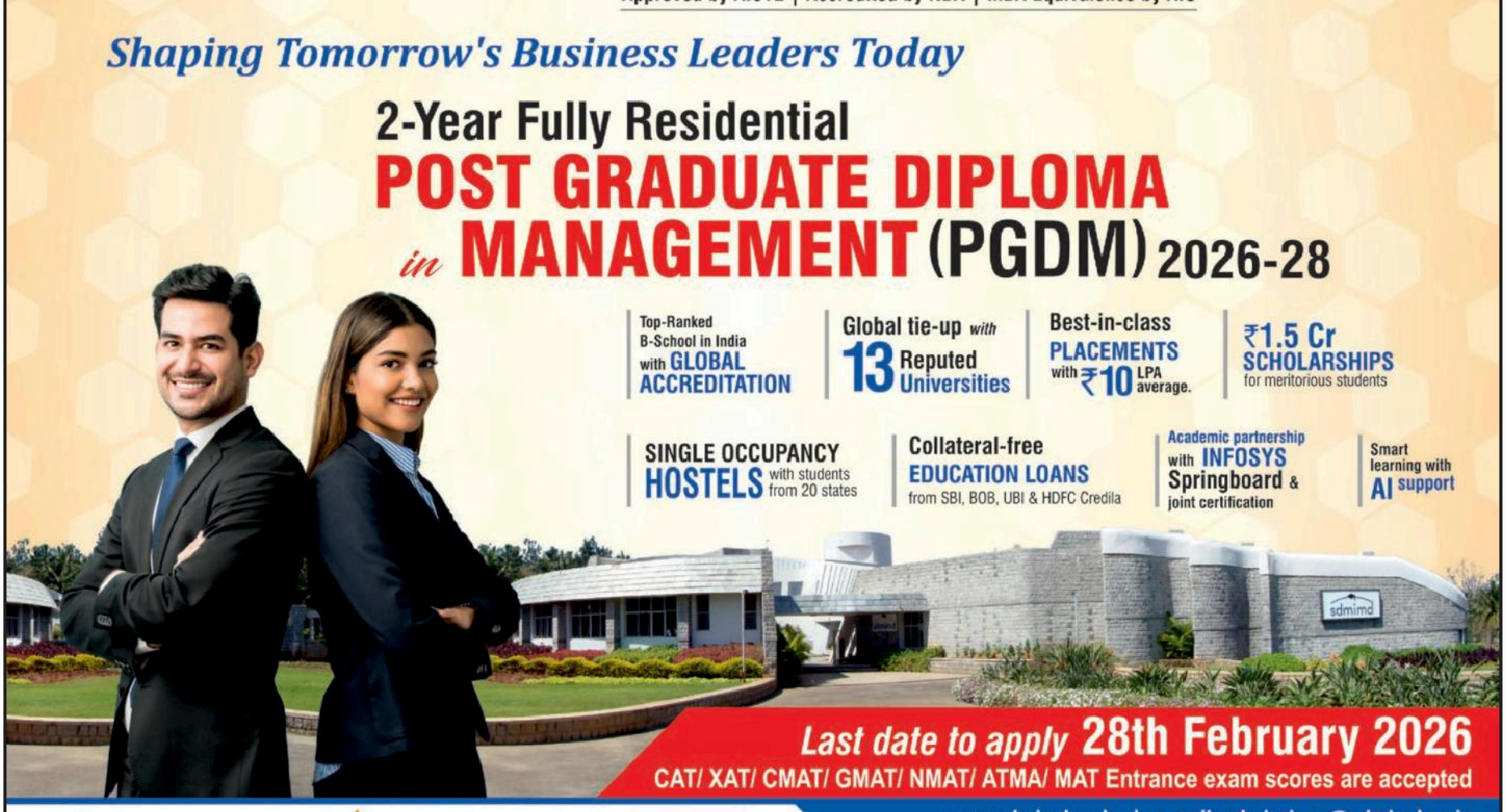

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Taking Shape...

Gorgeous Jain Temple of Kodagu

By P.V. Akshay

Nestled amid the quiet greenery of Suntikoppa in Somwarpet taluk of Kodagu district, a Jain Shwetambar temple is steadily taking shape at Hardoor village in Gundugutti Nakur — a location believed to be closely linked to ancient Jain settlements in the region.

The temple, named **Sri Jirawala Tirth Dham Coorg,** is ambitious both in scale and design. About 80 per cent of the construction has been completed and work is now underway to install the elaborately carved gopura.

Architecturally, the temple draws inspiration from the revered Sri Jirawala Parshwanath Jain Tirth in Rajasthan, one of Jainism's most important pilgrimage centres.

The temple project is being executed by Sri Om Shanti Charitable Trust, under the guidance of Jain Gurus Acharya Nayachandra Sagar and Dr. Ajit Chandra Sagar. Beyond being a place of worship, the Trust envisions the complex as a centre for meditation, learning and spiritual tourism.

Spread across 6.15 acres, the temple premises include an ornate entrance, a reception area and around 14 cottages for pilgrims. A prayer hall and a Bhojanalaya form part of the complex.

> "Sri Jirawala Tirth Dham Coorg draws the architectural inspiration from the revered Sri Jirawala Parshwanath Jain Tirth in Rajasthan, one of Jainism's most important pilgrimage centres. It is a blend of South and North Indian architectural traditions and combines art forms of Pallu, Pala, Chanda and Hoysala, with the Hoysala style — native to Karnataka — forming the core design."

The main temple structure occupies about half an acre, with the sanctum sanctorum measuring 80 x 60 feet. The gopura of the main shrine will rise to a height of 70 feet. The sanctum sanctorum will house five idols, while two smaller temples forming the outer structure will have two more idols. The idol of Sri Saraswathi Matha has already been installed in one of the outer temples.

Exquisite idols, intricate carvings

A highlight of the complex is the 84-inch Saraswathi Matha idol, carved out of black basalt stone using four distinct styles — Pallu, Pala, Hoysala and Chanda. The idol features miniature carvings of Goddess Ganika, Gautama Buddha and protective soldiers, all executed with remarkable detail.

Another outer temple houses the equally striking 84-inch Sri Padmavathi Matha idol, carved in Pallu, Pala and Hoysala styles. This idol is unique to Jain temples, as the Devi's head is formed by 108 Nagas, each intricately sculpted, including the head of the snake god itself. The Devi is also depicted with 108 hands, each holding a weapon, all carved with precision.

The Saraswathi Matha idol will be placed on the right side of the main temple, while the Padmavathi Matha idol will occupy the left.

[Continued on Page - 44]

What's in a Name?...Everything!

By C.P. Belliappa

A few years ago, while my wife and I were watching TV, the now-defunct landline rang. It's usually my wife who likes to take calls, but that day she motioned me to answer the phone as she was engrossed in her favourite programme on the Telly.

I reluctantly got up from my well-settled position on the couch. I ambled towards the telephone, hoping the caller would give up and I could go back to my potato status.

On realising that it was one of those tele-marketing calls, I was quite irritated. I was about to put the receiver down when the heavy North-Indian accent of a lady pleaded with me to give her just five minutes to explain a fantastic offer which she said would be hard to refuse.

The young lady had memorised her lines well and rattled off about 'a once-in-a-life-time' offer for membership of an extraordinary time-share at a most attractive price.

She was quick to add that the offer was only till the end of the month, which was just a week away. She sounded like a damsel-in-distress because she had to apparently meet her target membership enrolment.

For the next five minutes, she went on about the fabulous holiday destinations within and outside the country, where we could have a week's holiday free of cost every year for the next twenty-five years and it was transferable to a nominee.

Hearing the details did make me curious and I realised that I was being enticed into taking this membership. The lady finally said that there would be a detailed visual presentation of the deal at the Southern Star Hotel in Mysore and she wanted me and my wife to attend this presentation the following Sunday. She also mentioned our chances of winning a lucky prize.

We already had a programme of being in Mysore that Sunday and I thought 'no harm' in attending the presentation. The lady then wanted my name. When I mentioned it, she could not grasp it. I then tried to spell it out: **'C' for Calcutta, 'P' for Poona, 'B' for Bombay** and so on.

But the lady was totally confused. By then, my wife had gathered the details of the call by listening to my conversation and was quite amused at my quandary in getting my name understood.

She came up to the phone and said, 'May I?' I was quite fed up by then. 'Don't you know Calcutta, Poona and Bombay do not exist any longer?' said my wife as she took the receiver.

My wife was quick to recognise the North-Indian accent of the caller. She switched to Hindi, being proficient in the language, having lived in Delhi. She spoke with the lady for a while about the offer.

Our attendance was confirmed and my wife followed it by spelling out my name as: **'Charlie, Peter, Belliappa.'** To my surprise, the lady at the other end understood without any difficulty and the conversation soon concluded.

Come Sunday, we reached the hotel in Mysore at the appointed hour and found a large number of invitees like us. I went to the reception table where glossy brochures were being handed out.

When I mentioned my name, the girl perused a list and said, **"Welcome, Mr. Charlie Peter Belliappa,"** and handed me a folder. Prominently written on the folder was: Mr. & Mrs. Charlie Peter Belliappa! While I was in shock, my wife thought it was very funny.

Before I could protest, we were hurriedly ushered into a hall, where the presentation had just commenced. We were directed to a table on which was placed a small placard with our names: Mr. & Mrs. Charlie Peter Belliappa. I was totally embarrassed.

Another couple at our table struck up a conversation and kept referring to me as *Charlie*. I couldn't do anything about it, since an explanation would have been too long-winded. My wife gleefully continued to enjoy the joke on me.

During the programme, a few lucky prizes were announced. One couple got an LCD TV, another won a camera and then I heard my modified name being announced. My wife and I bagged a free three-day stay at the sponsor's time-share in Goa. We were handed the gift voucher on which, in bold letters, was written *'Congratulations Mr. & Mrs. Charlie Peter Belliappa — enjoy your stay with us.'*

At the end of the programme, I took the gift voucher to the organisers and told them about the mistake. But they threw up their hands, saying, "Sir, it's all entered in the main server of the company. We are in no position to change anything now."

We did use the gift-voucher and my re-jigged name got mentioned throughout our stay in Goa. However, the name went down very well in Goa and by the second day, we were quite comfortable with our new name.

Even now, I occasionally receive snail mail and e-mails from the time-share company addressed to my morphed misnomer. Years have gone by and whenever my wife feels like needling me, she yells: "Charlie Peter… !"

[This is one of the anecdotes in my book 'Tongue of Slip: Looking Back on Life with Humour,' Rupa Publications, 2013].

C.P. Belliappa writes humour, history and human interest stories and is a regular contributor to newspapers, websites and magazines. He holds a Master's degree in Chemical Engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology, USA. He currently lives in Kodagu and is involved in the management of educational institutions.

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A Dynasty's Devotion

[Continued from Page - 27]

The development of Chamundi Hill was a labour of love for the Maharajas. Every ruler left a mark, often linked to personal anecdotes that have since passed into folklore.

The earliest among them was Bettada Chamaraja Wadiyar (1513-1553). He constructed the "Hirikere" tank to ensure access to water for the Temple and the devotees.

Then came the legend related to "Bola" Chamaraja Wadiyar (1572-1576). The legend has it that while the King was climbing the Hill to offer prayers, a bolt of lightning struck near him.

While he survived, the shock caused his hair to fall out, leading to the nickname "Bola" (The Bald). The King viewed his survival as a divine blessing, further deepening the family's bond with the Goddess.

The royal family's vision further evolved with Dodda Devaraja Wadiyar (1659-1673) commissioning the most enduring works. He commissioned the famous 1,000 steps, a herculean task that allowed pilgrims to ascend the steep incline with greater ease and the erection of the 16-foot-high monolithic Nandi halfway up this path, at the 700th step.

Sculpted in 1664 from a single boulder of granite, this Nandi is a masterpiece of craftsmanship. He also established "Devarajapura," a colony of 63 houses, which he donated to the priests and temple staff, ensuring that the spiritual life of the Hill was self-sustaining.

The Poetic Wilderness

To read the descriptions of the Hill from the 17th century is to imagine a different world. In 1648, the court poet of Kanthirava Narasaraja, Govinda Vaidya, wrote the *Kanthirava Narasara Vijaya*.

He describes the "Mahabaladri" as a sky-kissing mountain where the air was thick with the scent of flowering trees and the songs of birds. He speaks of yogis meditating in caves, oblivious to the mountain mists and of a forest so dense that it harboured every variety of flower and fruit-bearing trees.

He describes a flight of steps that wound upward "like a great ladder," suggesting the existence of a much older flight of steps for the mountain's ascent.

This wilderness persisted well into the modern era. Until the mid-20th century, the foothills were a sprawling thicket of scrub jungle and ancient burial grounds.

It was a place of mystery and, occasionally, danger. Leopards were not a rarity; they were residents. Maharaja Jayachamaraja Wadiyar, the last ruling prince, often stayed at the Lalithadri Palace and records mention him having to deal with leopards that strayed too close to human settlements with a gun in his hand.

Perhaps the most missed feature of this era is the 'Horse-Shoe Valley.' A section of the Hill took the shape of a horseshoe and hence the name.

This natural amphitheatre on the Hill once acted as a catchment for monsoon rains, creating a delicate waterfall that fed into a pristine pool at the foot of the Hill. Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV would often retreat to a simple stone bench overlooking this Valley, finding in its silence peace and wisdom to govern his State as 'Rajarishi.'

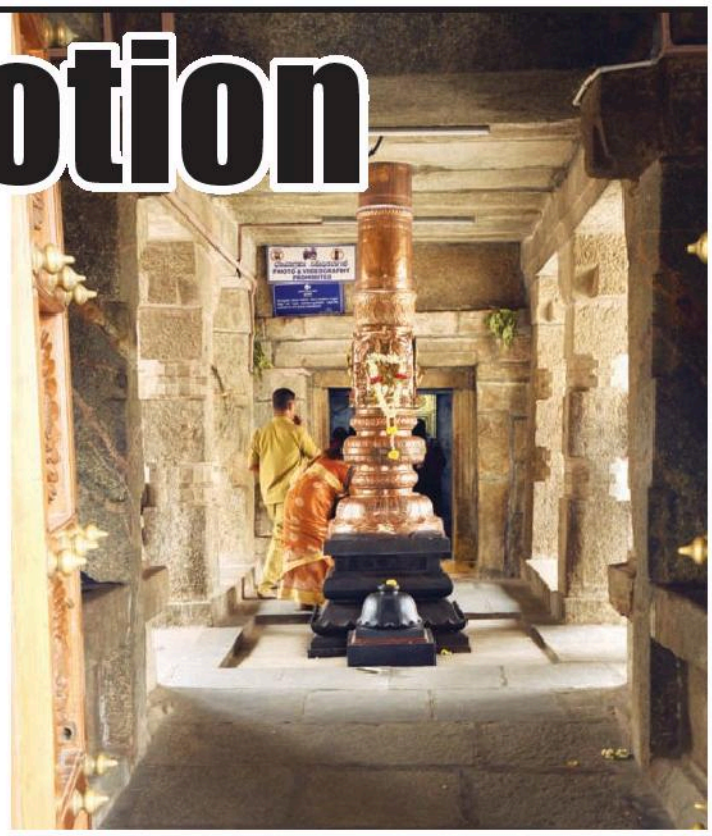
Lady Dufferin's Ascent

The Hill also captivated foreign visitors. In 1886, Lady Dufferin, the wife of the British Viceroy in India, visited Mysuru and left a vivid account of her experience in her travel diary.

In an age before the motorable road, she was carried up the 1,000 steps in a *jhampan* (a covered sedan chair) borne by twelve men. Her diary captures the rhythm of the climb: "They chanted on their way up... a wild sort of song, which sounded very inspiring."

She describes the view from the top as "sublime," though she admits the descent was "fatiguing and slippery." Her stop at the Nandi for a photograph with the local priests remains a poignant snapshot of the intersection between Victorian curiosity and Indian tradition.

[Continued on Page - 43]



The sacred Sthamba inside the sanctum sanctorum of Mahabaleswara Temple atop Chamundi Hill.

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Mummadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar leaves a personal legacy...

BHAKTA VIGRAHA: ***Mummadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar's devotional statue alongside his queens.***

[Continued from Page - 42]

In the late 19th and 20th centuries, "development" was carried out with a sense of aesthetic responsibility. Records show the existence of these two temples on the Chamundi Hill for a long time. The other temples, like the Narayanaswamy, are of a modern period.

A pivotal era of transformation occurred during the reign of Mummadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar. A fervent devotee of the Goddess, Mummadi did not merely provide financial patronage; he left a personal legacy, installing his own *Bhakta Vigraha* (devotional statue) alongside those of his queens within the temple precincts, forever marking the royal family's presence as humble servants of the deity.

Mummadi also built a Palace of modest size on the Hill. This allowed the royal family to stay in the presence of the Goddess, further cementing the Hill as a primary residence of the spirit rather than just a destination for a day's excursion.

When Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV built the motorable road, the Lalithadri Palace and the iconic Mahishasura statue, he ensured they blended with the topography. Even the electric lights he installed were arranged in a specific arch known as the *Shiva Dhanus* (Shiva's Bow), which glowed like a celestial weapon when viewed from city below.

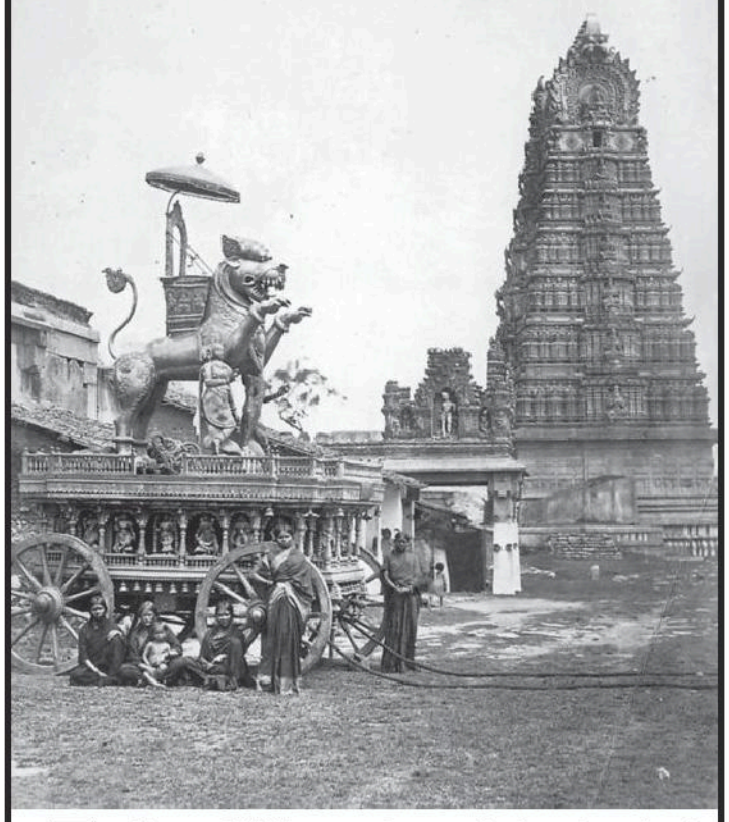
Today, that symmetry is gone. In its place is a haphazard forest of electric poles. The recent push for tourism has brought with it a deluge of problems — concrete structures, plastic waste, unregulated shops and parking lots and more.

Environmentalists warn that the Hill is fragile. The granite slopes, while seemingly sturdy, rely on a delicate balance of vegetation to prevent soil erosion and landslides, which have become increasingly common in recent monsoon seasons.

The conversion of Chamundi Hill into a commercial hub poses not only a threat to its sanctity but also to its physical stability.

Gouri Satya, the former Editor of 'Samachar' for nearly 40 years (until it became a digital edition), has donned many caps. A Senior Journalist, he has served various national newspapers and has written a number of articles. An Author and Columnist, he has written several books which have seen reprints and regularly writes a column titled 'Mysuru - A Look at its Past' in ***Star of Mysore*** *and 'Namma Mysurina Asamanyaru' in* ***Mysuru Mithra.***

The Price of Silence



The Chamundi Hill is more than a collection of temples; it is the lungs of Mysuru and the keeper of its history. From the ancient "Marballa Thirtha" to the modern cultural symbol of Dasara, the Hill has given much to the people of Karnataka.

However, the price of modern development may be too high and further development may be dangerous. The wild songs heard by Lady Dufferin have been replaced by the drone of the engines of the vehicles that carry the tourists and the devotees in hordes.

The 'Horse-Shoe Valley' is marred by construction. Vigilant stakeholders — locals and environmentalists — are concerned over the risk to the crowning beauty of Mysuru.

The Goddess may still reside on the peak, but the pristine paradise she once inhabited is fast becoming a memory. We tend to forget that some places are meant to be climbed with reverence, not paved with concrete.

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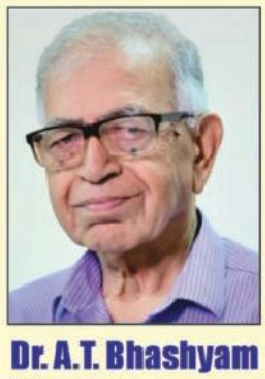
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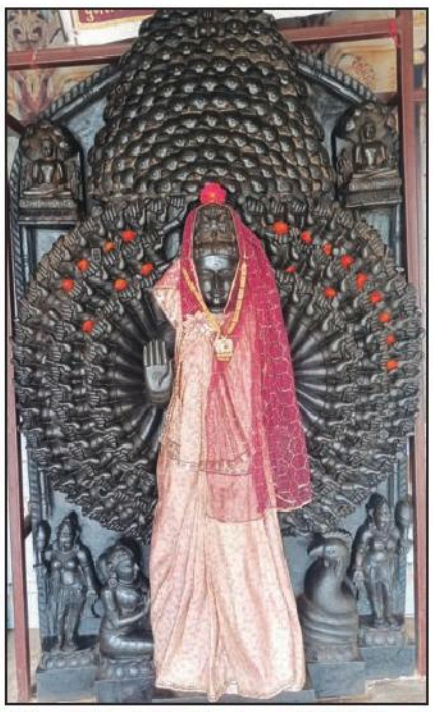
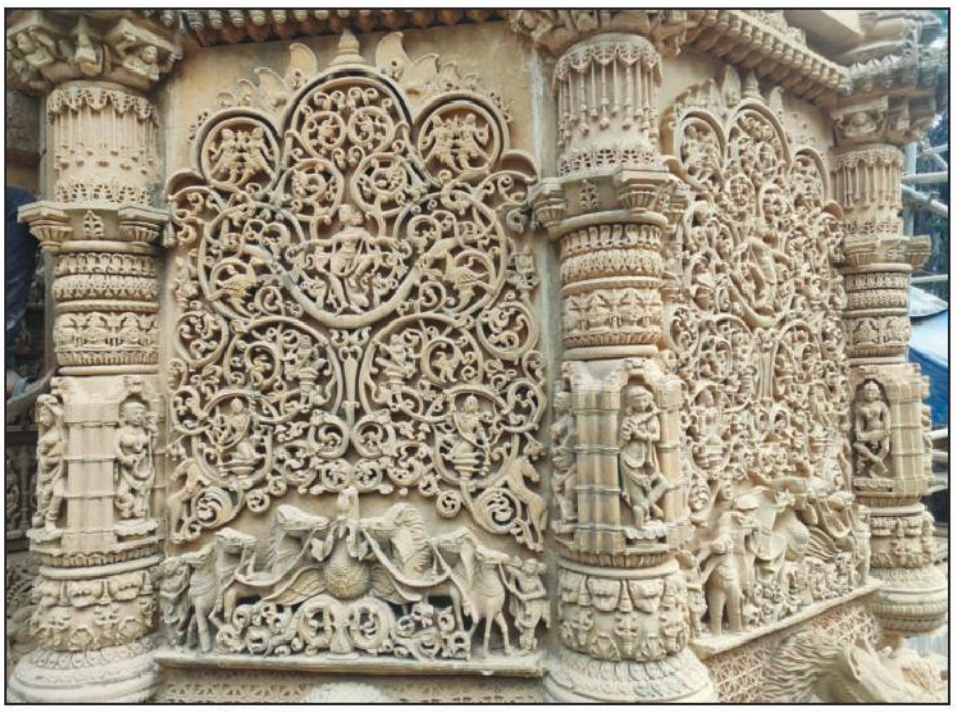




The 84-inch Sri Padmavathi Matha idol where the Devi's head is formed by 108 Nagas, each intricately sculpted. Picture right shows two sides of the sanctum sanctorum where motifs of horses, lions, peacocks and elephants are carved.

[Continued from Page - 40]

The deep-rooted Jain history

Those associated with the project point out that Anjanageri Bettageri, part of an ancient mountain range extending up to Kushalnagar, has yielded Jain scriptures, basadis and settlement traces dating back over 1,000 years. The Trust maintains that the area once hosted thriving Jain communities, making it a natural site for reviving Jain religious presence.

Jainism has deep roots in Kodagu, particularly between the 10th and 12th centuries under the Kongalvas. Mulluru near Shanivarasanthe remains a prominent Jain centre, with three 11th-century basadis — dedicated to Parshwanatha, Shanthinatha and Chandranatha — built in the Ganga-Chola style. Kodagu's location also holds strategic importance. According to Tourism Department estimates, nearly five lakh Jain tourists visit Mysuru and Kodagu every year.

A model of Sri Jirawala Parshwanath Jain Tirth in Rajasthan based on which Sri Jirawala Tirth Dham Coorg is being built.

Craftsmanship and community

More than 40 professional sculptors from Odisha are involved in carving the temple, using marble stone sourced from Odisha. The work combines traditional hand carving with modern machinery.

Intricate motifs of elephants, horses, lions, peacocks and other figures adorn the structure. Beyond religious worship, the complex is being developed as a meditation and study centre, reflecting Jain values of learning, discipline and non-violence. A meditation hall is already functional, with devotees gathering regularly for prayers and reflection. The structure has now reached the gopura level, with frames ready and installation expected to begin in the coming weeks.

The on-site cottages allow pilgrims from Bengaluru, Mysuru and other regions to stay comfortably, with food and basic amenities provided. Despite ongoing construction, an estimated one lakh devotees have visited the site over the past five years. The Trust also has plans for further expansion, including a Goshala. The project is being overseen by Sevak Bhavesh Parekh, along with Trustees Praveen Jain of Mysuru and Vimal Jain of Kushalnagar.

[As told to B.C. Thimmaiah]

White Jirawala Parshwanath idol

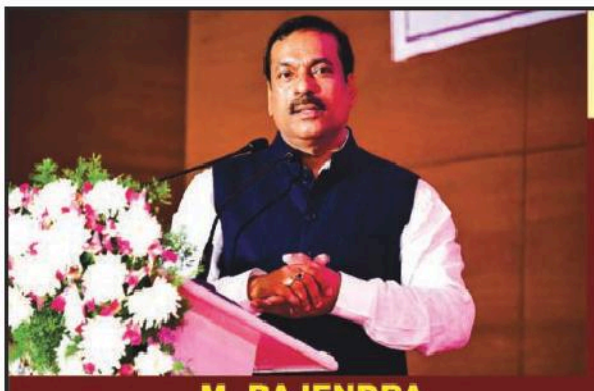
The miniature idol of Sri Jirawala Parshwanath.

At the heart of the sanctum sanctorum, a five-foot white idol of Sri Jirawala Parshwanath, the 23rd Tirthankara, seated in padmasana posture, will be installed.

Currently, a miniature idol has been placed for prayer purposes. Apart from this, the idols of Neminatha, the 22nd Tirthankara, Adinatha, the first Tirthankara, Shanthinatha, the 16th Tirthankara and Bhagwan Mahaveer, the 24th Tirthankara, will be installed.

The construction of Rs. 50 crore temple began in March 2020 and has progressed steadily over past five years.

Though this temple follows the structural layout of Rajasthan shrine, the Kodagu Jain temple project is distinctive in its blend of South and North Indian architectural traditions. It combines the art forms of Pallu, Pala, Chanda and Hoysala, with the Hoysala style, which is native to Karnataka, forming the core design.



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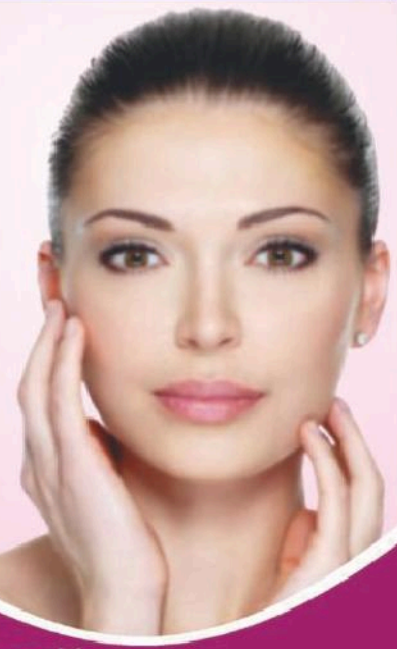

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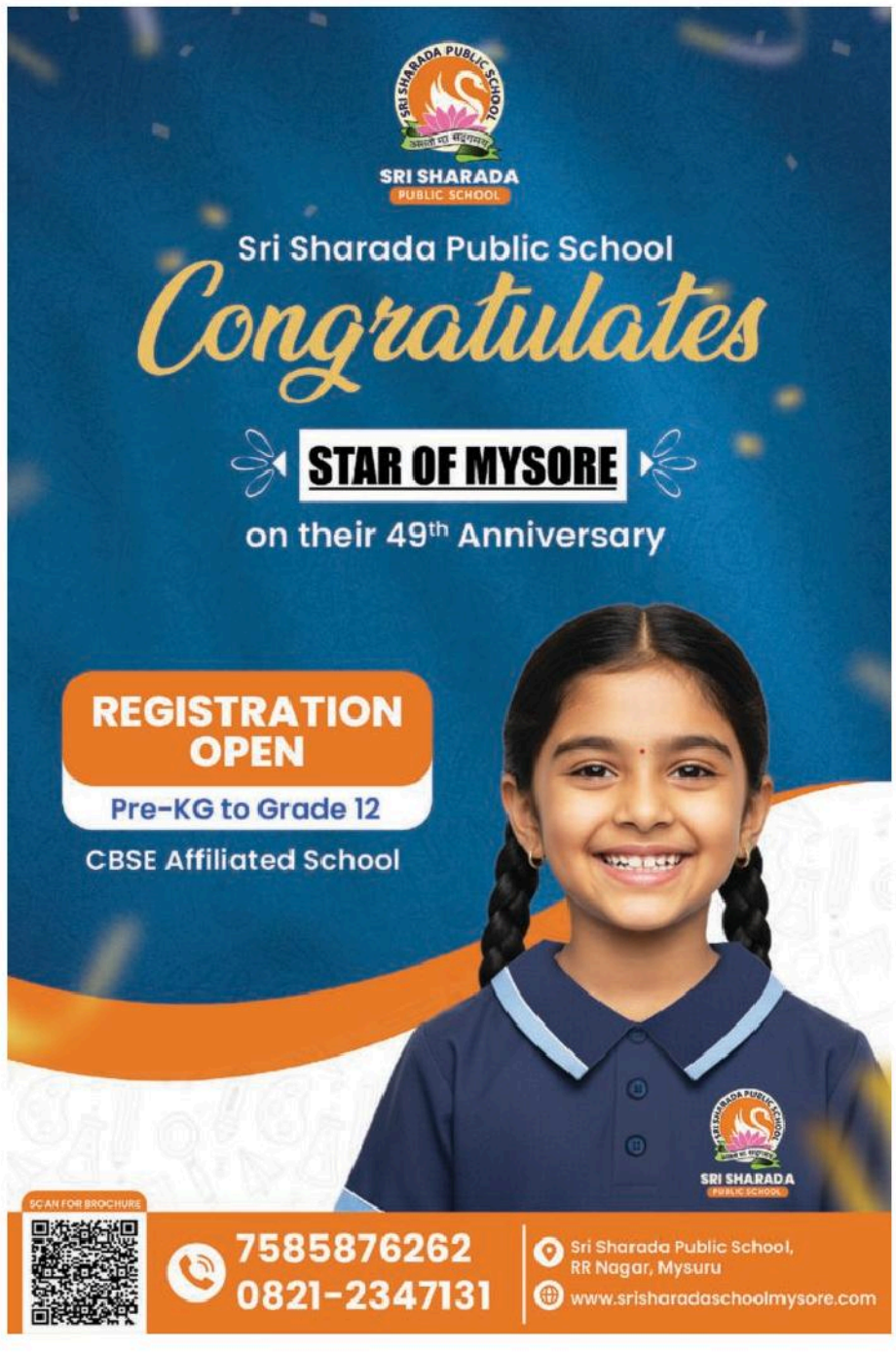

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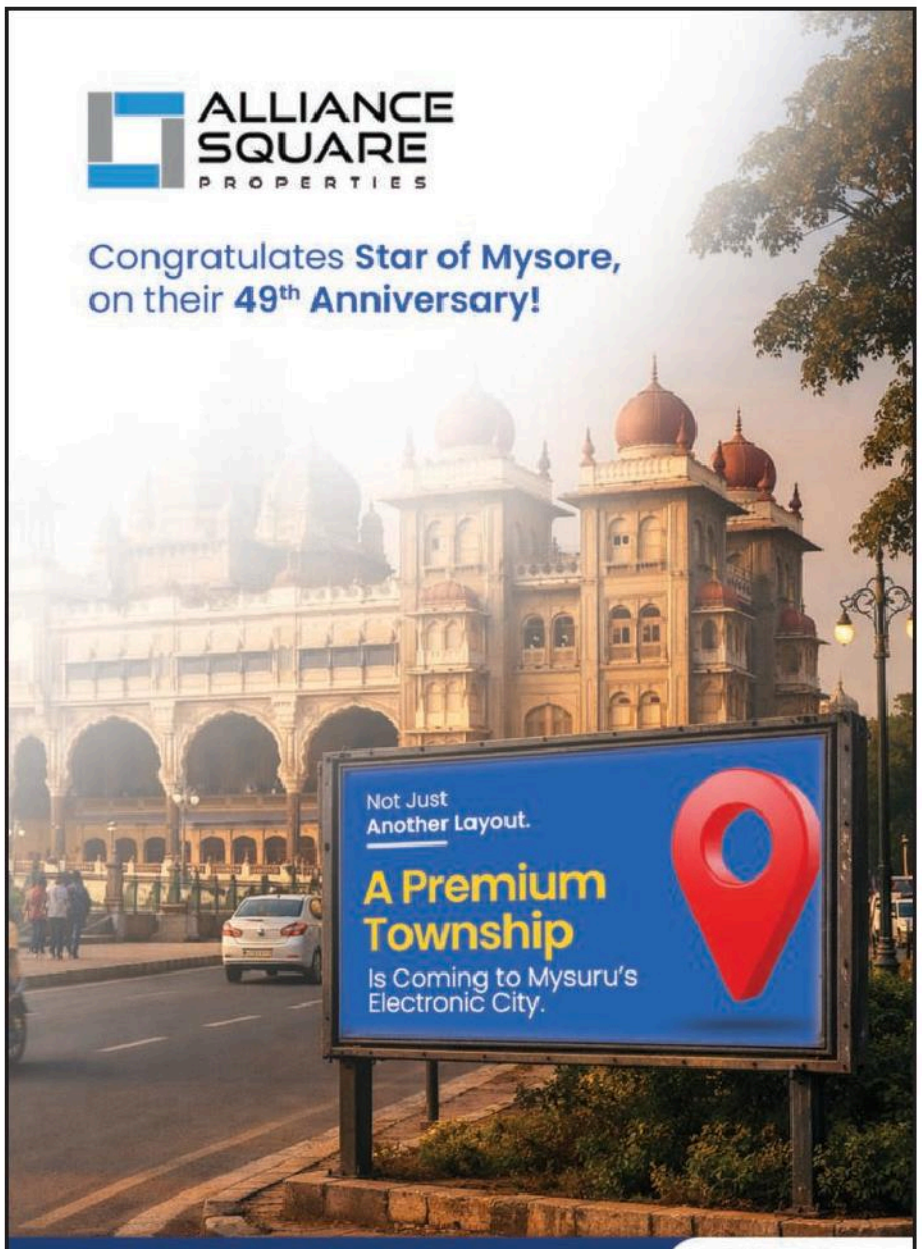

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Generations of Pride

Betel leaf farmers with their produce packed using coconut fronds before the auction at Udbur Market.

[Continued from Page - 30]

For Manju, a fifth-generation *Veelyadele* grower from Udbur, the crop is more than a livelihood. "I have been growing *Mysore Veelyadele* for 27 years now. The pride associated with its cultivation is unexplainable," he says. "But with the shortage of skilled labour and rising daily wages, it has become an expensive affair," he rues. Despite the costs, farmers here continue, driven as much by tradition as by economics.

Mysore Veelyadele is grown in three main varieties — *'bili yele'* (white leaf), *'kappu yele'* (black leaf) and *'yenne kempu'* (oily red). The 'white' leaf is actually light green and has a shelf life of two to three days. The black leaf, darker green in colour, lasts longer, while the oily red variety falls somewhere in between. What unites them all is the distinct heart-shaped leaf.

No auspicious occasion — be it a wedding, baby naming ceremony or house-warming — is considered complete without betel leaves served with slaked lime, arecanut and sugar after a sumptuous lunch.

Beyond ritual significance, chewing betel leaf is believed to aid digestion, a belief still held strongly among elders, many of whom remain regular chewers. For some, the habit has turned into an addiction, visible in their reddened lips and tongue.

Veelyadele is both labour-intensive and water-intensive. Soil moisture must be maintained consistently, with proper drainage to prevent water-logging. The surface must remain wet throughout cultivation and pumpsets are used for irrigation.

Earlier, every farmer maintained a pond — either to store rainwater or to pump water from nearby sources using diesel motors. Though methods have evolved, the dependence on water has not.

For beginners, the *Veelyadele* vine is usually planted in arecanut or other tree farms to provide vertical support. The plants are spaced one-and-a-half feet apart, in rows four feet wide, with soil enriched using cow dung manure.

As the vine grows to about a foot in height, it is tied to the support trees using ropes made from banana stems. The stems are soaked in water, peeled and twisted into rope-like strands.

Why banana stem ropes? Mallesh, a farmer from Udbur, explains it with quiet conviction.

"Both *Veelyadele* and banana are essential for auspicious occasions. They are offered to God during pujas. That's why they make the perfect combination," he says, adding a caution passed down generations: "Use any other rope and the chances of the plant withering are more."

Mallesh also points out how farmers enter the *Veelyadele* plot barefoot, after offering *'namaskara'* to the soil, an act that reflects the deep reverence they hold for the crop.

Growers from neighbouring villages such as T. Katur, Gopalapura, Talur and Dhangalli also bring their produce here. While Udbur farmers are allotted space free of cost, outsiders pay a daily rent of Rs. 50. The amount collected is offered to the *hundi* of Sri Lakshminarayana Swamy Temple.

Within an hour, the market winds up. For those who secure good returns, the joy is evident. With 'chaat' and sweet shops lining the area, many farmers buy treats to take home, a small celebration of a good day's work.

From field to auction

Harvesting is done between 6 am and 12 noon when the weather is favourable. Farmers use a locally made tool called *'Yele Uguru,'* a finger-shaped metal cutter worn on the thumb to gently cut the betel leaves.

The betel leaves are then packed — 200 leaves per bundle, 50 bundles per *'pindi'* making a total of 10,000 leaves — in bundles weaved using coconut fronds. Water is sprinkled periodically to keep them fresh.

By afternoon, farmers begin arriving at the market, alone or in small groups, carrying their *'pindis.'* At exactly 4 pm, one Narayani strikes a metal rod against the market's support pole — a sound resembling a school bell. And lo, the auction begins.

Bundles are untied, leaves displayed and bids fly thick and fast as farmers try to secure best price from middlemen.

A *'pindi'* usually fetches between Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 8,000, though exceptional quality has seen prices touch Rs. 15,000. Like any crop, prices fluctuate with quality, shelf life and overall yield.

From village to homes

Retailers purchase their share at Udbur Market and sell the leaves at Devaraja Market, Vani Vilas Market, roadside pavements and grocery shops across Mysuru.

Despite changing lifestyles and growing urban influence, *Mysore Veelyadele* remains a must-buy for households on Mondays and Fridays, the days dedicated to worship. The price, however, reflects its dwindling supply and sustained demand. Each leaf now costs about Rs. 1.50.

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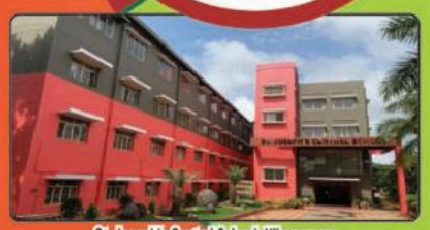
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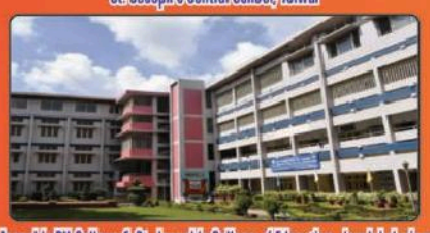
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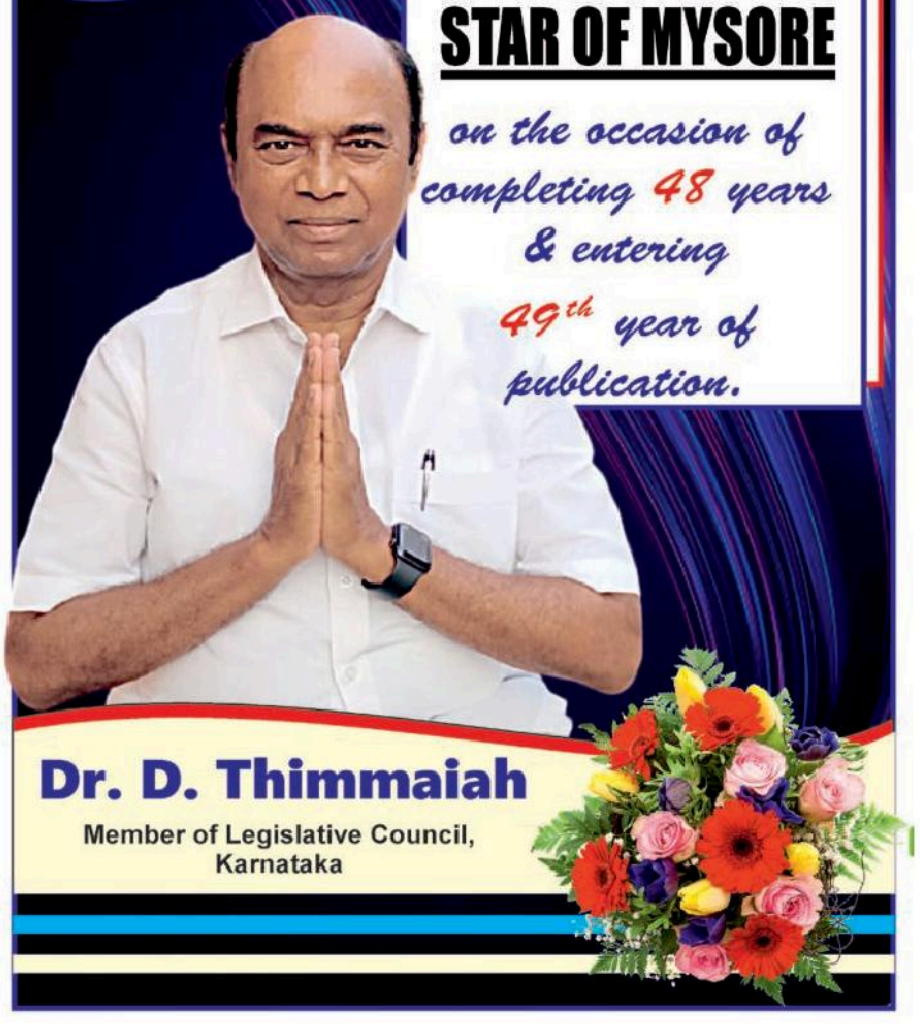

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Protected stretch of Cauvery

[Continued from Page - 24]

That single act marked the beginning of organised Mahseer conservation in Kodagu. Soon after, the Coorg Wildlife Society approached the Fisheries Department, which leased a 25-kilometre stretch of the Cauvery, from Siddapur Bridge to Kushalnagar Bridge, to the Society in 1985 and declared it a protected zone for Mahseer.

The move was accompanied by wide publicity against destructive fishing practices such as dynamiting, the use of nets, copper sulphate poisoning and even poisoning with wild fruits, methods that were rampant at the time and posed a serious threat to aquatic life. Once the lease was handed over, such practices were completely banned and strict enforcement followed.

Equally significant was the crackdown on riverbank encroachments. After the declaration of the Mahseer protected zone, previously unreported encroachments were identified and cleared. "The CWS deserves full credit for making the riverbanks along the protected stretch encroachment-free," Aiyappa told *Star of Mysore*.

Awareness programmes conducted on Mahseer conservation.

Science-backed conservation model

C.S. Ponnappa oversaw the conservation operations in the initial years, laying the foundation for what would later evolve into a science-backed conservation model. Subsequent studies established that the Humpback Mahseer, endemic to the Cauvery, is among the largest freshwater fish in India, growing up to 63-kg.

"For nearly 20 years, the CWS successfully protected the original 25-km stretch. Encouraged by the results, the Fisheries Department later extended our responsibility to a nearly 100-km stretch of the Cauvery from Bethri Bridge to Kushalnagar and the Barapole River. While we managed and protected about 95-km for a decade, logistical challenges forced us to withdraw from Barapole," Aiyappa revealed.

"Conservation along the Bethri-Kushalnagar stretch also proved difficult due to dense coffee estates on either side and the influx of a floating population. Eventually, efforts were refocused on the original stretch between Siddapur and Kushalnagar," he said.

"Over the past decade, this protected stretch was further extended to 35-km, up to Shirangala. Today, Mahseer is conserved from Siddapur Bridge to Shirangala till the River Cauvery leaves Kodagu," Aiyappa noted.

Radio-collaring efforts

One of the most significant contributions of the CWS has been scientific research. The Mahseer telemetry study conducted was the first-of-its-kind in India.

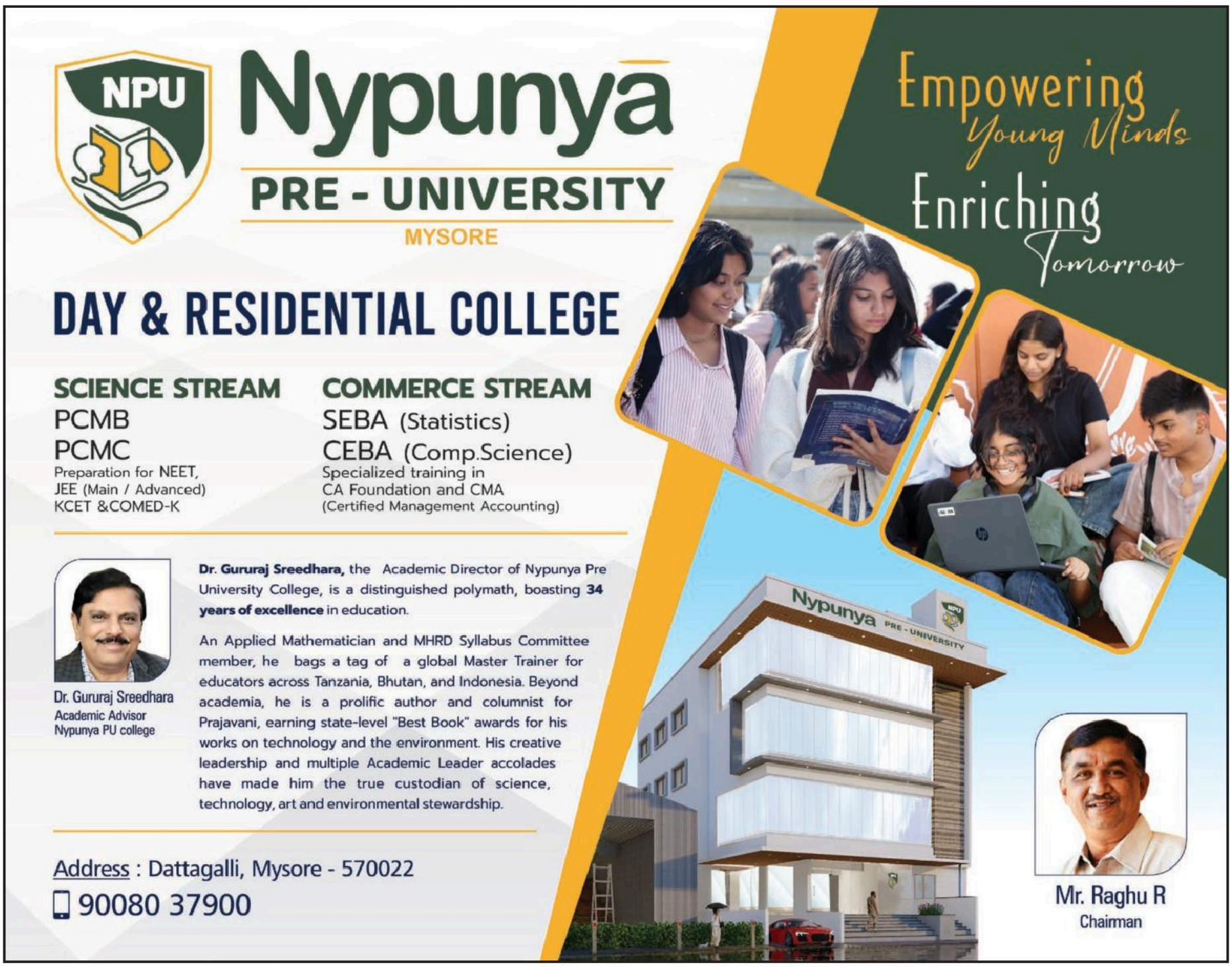
Over 40 Mahseers were caught, fitted with radio transmitters and released back into the river to study. However, known for their intelligence, the fish often rubbed the transmitters against rocks and managed to dislodge them.

Despite these challenges, researchers were able to gather valuable data on migration patterns and habitat preferences during high-water conditions.

National institutions such as the Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute and the Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture undertook five years of research in the region.

"Until then, there was little data on the upper reaches of the Cauvery, covering water quality across seasons, sediment composition, riparian vegetation and fish diversity. We supported these studies by providing staff and access to field locations. The findings, expected to be released soon, will offer deeper insights into the river's ecology, including its insect and plant life," Aiyappa revealed.

[Continued on Page - 58]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From Keyboard to CHISEL

By M.T. Yogesh Kumar

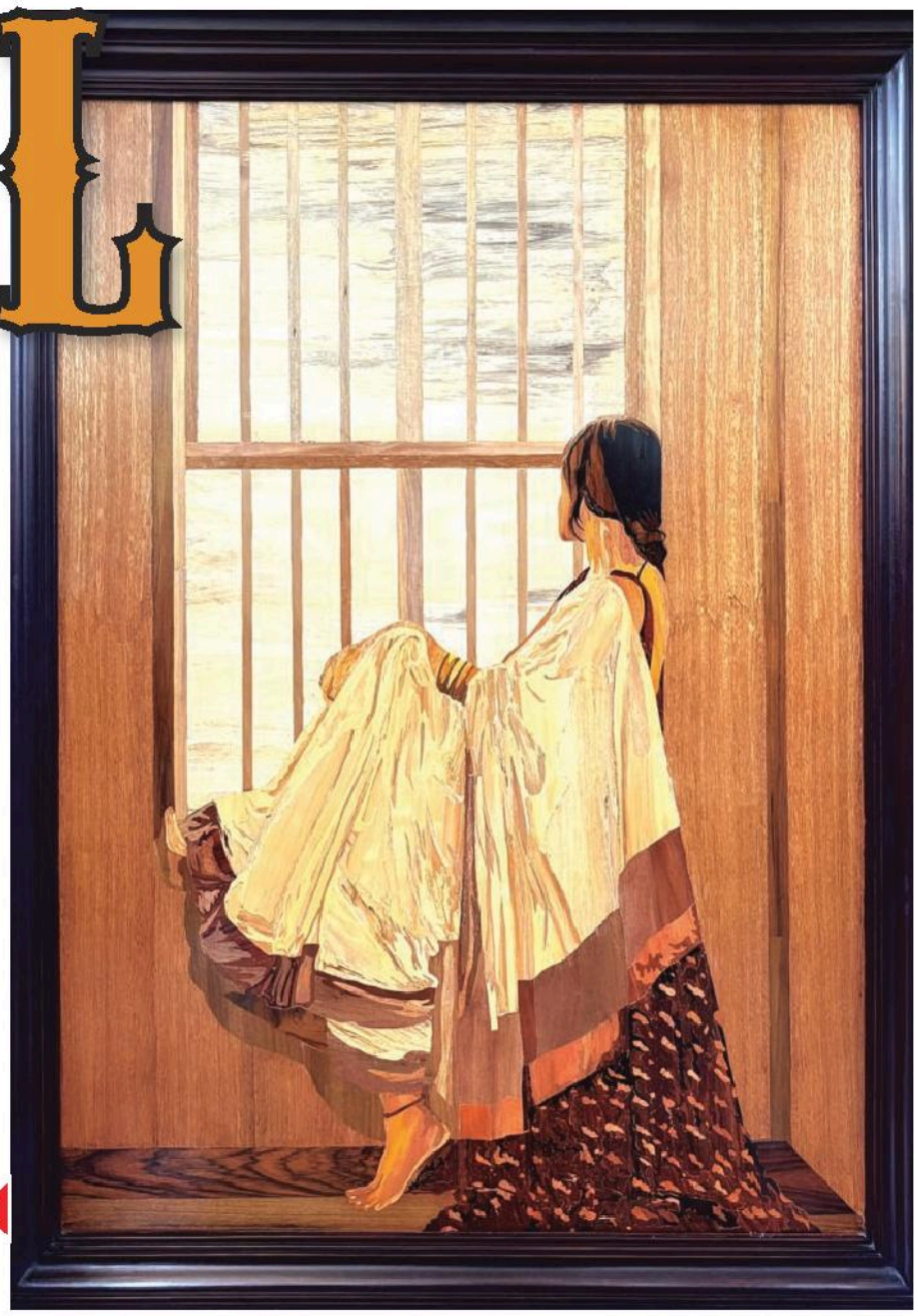
Mysore Rosewood Inlay Art, renowned worldwide and protected with a Geographical Indication (GI) tag, continues to draw admirers for its elegance and intricate craftsmanship.

While the art form has traditionally been preserved by generations of artisans, one of its new torchbearers comes from an unlikely background: Information Technology.

B. Mohan Kumar, a resident of N.R. Mohalla, is a software engineer by profession and an inlay artist by passion. Smitten by the beauty of this unique art form since childhood, he formally embraced it only seven years ago.

What began as a quiet pursuit alongside a professional software engineering career has since grown into a full-fledged artistic journey, marked by thousands of completed works and a widening circle of admirers.

[Continued on Page - 70]



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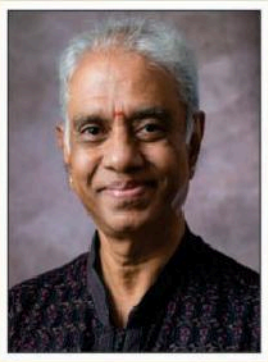

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'STAR OF MYSORE' ಪತ್ರಿಕೆ 49ನೇ ವಾರ್ಷಿಕೋತ್ಸವವನ್ನು ಆಚರಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿದೆ.
ಸತ್ಯ, ಧೈರ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಹೊಣೆಗಾರಿಕೆಯೊಂದಿಗೆ ಸಾಗುತ್ತಿರುವ
ಈ ಶುಭ ಸಂದರ್ಭದಲ್ಲಿ ನಮ್ಮ ಶಾಲೆಯ ವತಿಯಿಂದ ಹಾರ್ದಿಕ ಅಭಿನಂದನೆಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ ಶುಭಾಶಯಗಳು

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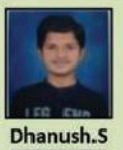
Akheel Ahmed Nadaf

C.Bhavana

Dhanalakshmi.M

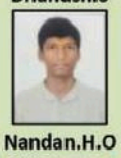

Dhanush.S

Dhruthi.J

Jahnavi.S.N

Madhusudan Raju.S

Namitha


Nandan.H.O

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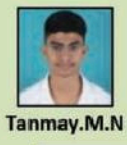
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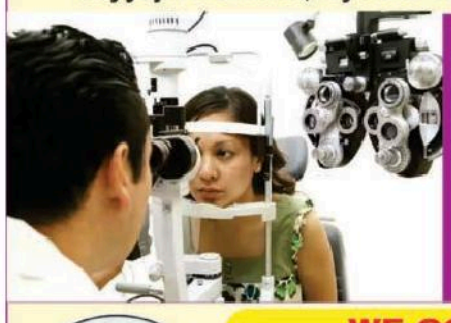

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ಶುಭಹಾರೈಕೆ

ಕಳೆದ
48
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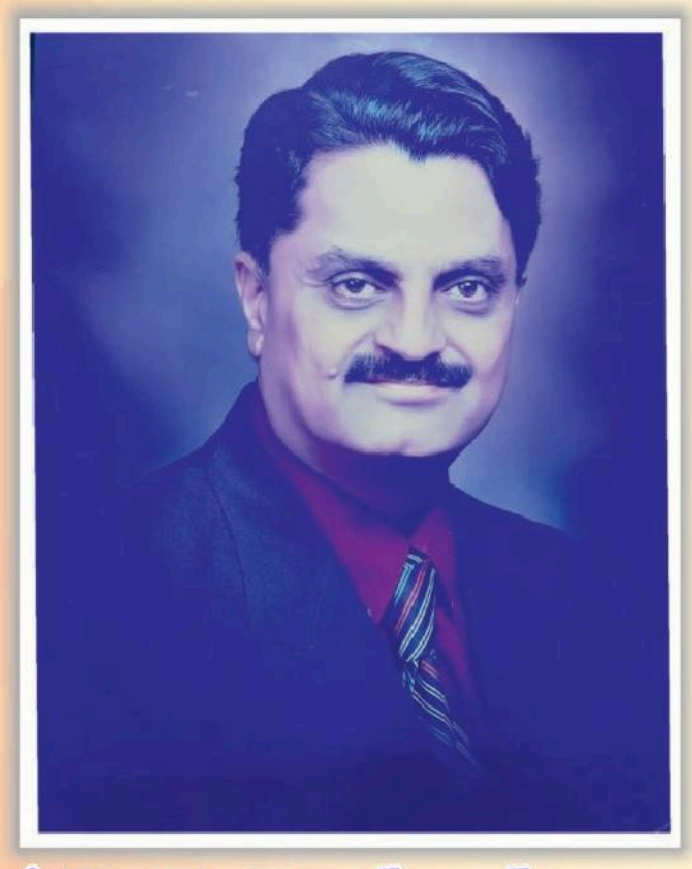
Best wishes on the occasion of 49th Anniversary



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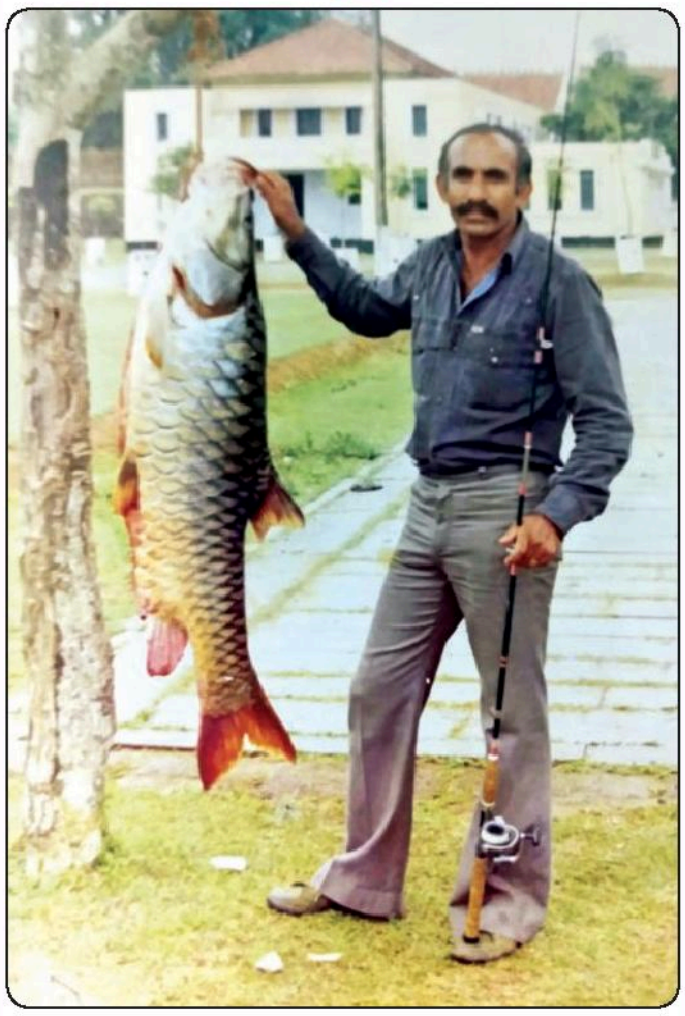

A 44-kg hump-backed Mahseer caught by Chendanda S. Ponnappa in June 1985 at Valnoor in Kodagu became a turning point for Mahseer conservation. The feat was discussed in detail at a Coorg Wildlife Society committee meeting, where members resolved to protect this iconic species from destructive fishing practices prevalent among locals. Ponnappa's remarkable catch went on to inspire a committed, science-based movement for Mahseer conservation.

Ban on mining, fishing

[Continued from Page - 52]

"We also collaborated with Carleton University, Canada, on a study examining post-release mortality of Mahseer. The results were encouraging, showing a survival rate of 99.5 percent among fish that were caught and released," Conservationist Aiyappa said.

Legal intervention has also played a conservation role. An order was obtained from the Karnataka High Court banning sand mining in Mahseer-protected areas. Four full-time river watchers now patrol the stretch, monitoring illegal activities and gathering information on netting.

"With dynamiting and chemical poisoning classified as serious offences, such activities have virtually disappeared from the protected zones. Public awareness has grown to the extent that locals now alert authorities to any violations," he noted.

Mahseer, Aiyappa points out, is among the most intelligent freshwater fish. Their survival over millions of years is testimony to their adaptability. The Mahseer derives its name from Sanskrit — 'mahat' (big) and 'śiras' (head).

Conservation efforts here go beyond a single species. The Cauvery is home to over 100 endemic fish species, all of which are protected under the current ecosystem-based conservation model. By minimising human intervention, aquatic life has begun to thrive across the protected stretches.

Mahseer is not edible. Wherever they thrive, invasive species such as Catfish and Tilapia fail to survive. Eating Mahseer causes persistent vomiting, possibly due to its high protein content or toxic fat composition. Today, the fish is globally renowned as a sport species rather than a food fish.

Since 2018, following directions from the Fisheries Department, Aiyappa has been attempting to breed the Humpback Mahseer and Orange-Finned Mahseer in captivity. Several attempts failed due to unforeseen challenges.

"Currently, juvenile fish have been collected and are being reared in controlled conditions at the Mahseer hatchery in Harangi," he said.

This effort is ongoing to develop brood stock. Aiyappa remains hopeful. If successful, even 100 fishlings released into the wild would mark the first instance of captive breeding of a critically endangered freshwater fish in India.

The presence of Mahseer of various sizes in the protected areas already points to a positive trend, proof that the species is breeding, returning and repopulating the Cauvery under sustained conservation efforts.

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Congratulations on
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With Best Regards
C. Basave Gowda
Former MUDA Chairman

Loving a city that's forgetting itself...

I was raised in Mysuru and have spent all of my childhood here. I attended school and college in this beautiful and amazing city.

Though I have lived outside India for over two decades, I try my best to return every year to visit my family. Each visit is meant to feel like coming home. Instead, it increasingly feels like watching someone you love slowly lose their way. Mysuru was once known for its greenery, its calm, its dignity. It was a city that moved at a human pace — clean streets, functional roads, orderly traffic and a shared sense that public spaces mattered.

Today, Mysuru feels like a fading memory. What greets visitors now is stark and painful: garbage patches everywhere, plastic choking footpaths and drains, broken roads that seem permanently under repair, traffic signals that either don't work or are openly ignored and unchecked encroachment of streets by illegal vendors and food carts.

The city feels crowded, chaotic and neglected. Civic sense appears to be eroding before our eyes. This decline did not happen overnight, nor can it be blamed on growth alone. Cities grow — that is natural. But Mysuru has grown without discipline, without enforcement and without accountability.

Rules exist on paper, but not on the ground. When violations go unchecked, disorder becomes normalised. When garbage remains where it is dumped, people stop seeing it as a problem. When traffic laws are ignored without consequence, lawlessness becomes routine.

Dangerous acceptance of decay

The most troubling aspect is not just infrastructural failure, but collective resignation. A dangerous acceptance of decay has set in — where chaos is dismissed as inevitable and cleanliness is treated as optional.

Visitors feel the shock immediately. Residents, over time, lose their reference point for what the city once was and what it still could be. Having lived in cities where systems work — not because people are perfect, but because rules are enforced — I can say this with certainty: civic sense flourishes only when governance does its job. People respect public spaces when they believe those spaces are protected and valued.

When enforcement disappears, even well-meaning citizens eventually give up. This is not an attack on Mysuru. It is an expression of grief. I love this city deeply. I breathe it. I feel it. That is why it hurts to see it reduced to indifference by authorities who fail to govern and by citizens who have stopped demanding better.

Basic non-negotiables

Cities do not recover through slogans. They recover when people refuse to normalise decay. Mysuru does not need grand visions or cosmetic fixes. It needs something far more basic — and far more urgent: Enforcement, accountability and civic pride restored as non-negotiables.

Eyesore at Bogadi 2nd Stage.

Clean streets, functioning roads, regulated commerce and respect for traffic laws are not luxuries of 'developed' cities. They are the minimum expectations of any city that respects itself. The question is no longer whether Mysuru can be restored, but whether we are willing to demand better from our institutions and from ourselves.

Decline should never be accepted as normal. If we truly love this city, then caring must translate into action and nostalgia must give way to responsibility.

Mysuru can still reclaim its dignity — but only if we choose not to look away any longer.

— Praveen Ramteke
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Vanishing tower clocks

[Continued from Page - 16]

Chikka Gadiyara

Chikka Gadiyara, also called Dufferin Fountain, was inaugurated on Dec. 1, 1886, to commemorate the ceremonial visit of Countess and Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, at the invitation of Chamaraja Wadiyar X.

The inauguration was marked by a State banquet, fireworks, war-dance performances and drama *Droupadi Swayamvara* at Rangacharlu Memorial Hall.

It is a two-in-one structure with dials on four sides and a fountain at the centre. Old-time shop owners in the vicinity say that earlier they could hear the sound of the gong from a distance of a kilometre.

The year 2012 saw the clearing of the surrounding space, the addition of small fountains and decorative lamps and seating arrangements that enabled cultural programmes to be held.

The clock has since stopped working and shop owners say the person hired to maintain it is not paid regularly — hence the apathy. Dufferin Clock Tower is at the Southern end of Devaraja Market. The two other planned marketplaces that carry the "heritage" tag are Mandi Market and Vani Vilas Market.

Tower at Mandi Market

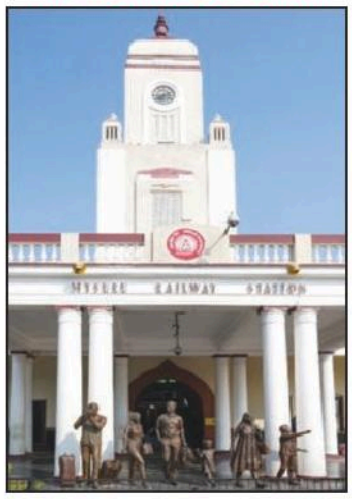
The one at Mandi bears reminiscence of a clock. Mandi Market was built by Chamaraja Wadiyar X. The market has a box-like structure with stalls in use for over 130 years.

A clock on the welcome arch once held pride of place but has been replaced by a round new clock, which also does not work. Long-standing shop owners do not remember seeing the original clock. Presumably, it was lost long ago; the tower now stands silently watching the transactions.

The market lacks regular maintenance and traders request governing authorities to restore its heritage character.

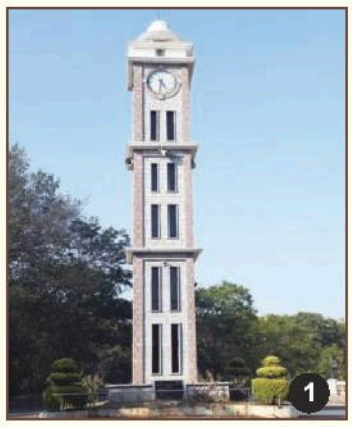
The architectural style of the building, they say, is unique. If this is done, perhaps thought will also be given to installing an appropriate and working clock.

The City Railway Station



The Mysuru City Railway Station was remodelled in 1938 by Dewan Sir Mirza Ismail, who ensured that the clock tower was raised in height and aligned so that its vertical axis became central to present-day JLB Road. The clock that once guided passengers rushing to catch trains is now largely ignored.

Edifice of time...



The century-old legacy of clock towers in Mysuru seems to have revived over the past decade, with new towers sprouting up in different localities. Private players such as Brigade Properties and Infosys have also entered the fray.

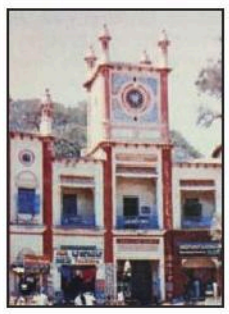
The first to scrape the sky is the **Centenary Clock Tower at Manasagangothri** in 2016 *(Pic.1)*, rising 70 feet. It is a two-in-one clock with a radio installed, enabling students and others to listen to broadcasts while seated on stone benches. That it has become a photo shoot point tells us much about the era we live in.

Shorter, at around 50 feet, is the tower at **Sangam Circle** *(Pic.2)*, Third Stage, Vijayanagar. It has four dials and a rather poor imitation of a bronze dome attempting an old-Mysore touch. There is no plaque mentioning details.

Echoing the Big Ben replica in Kolkata, a **38-foot clock tower has been built in Udayagiri** in 2023 *(Pic.3)*, by the Mysuru City Corporation at a cost of Rs. 31 lakh. Four large dials, each one 2.5 metres in diameter with Roman numerals, stand next to the Madeena Mosque. Dials on two sides do not work.

At **Siddaramaiah Circle** in University Layout on Dattagalli Outer Ring Road, a clock tower *(Pic.4)*, inaugurated on April, 2022, was built by Mysore University Employees Housing Cooperative Society. A single clock is dwarfed by a large plaque listing dignitaries — a far cry from earlier times. The structure lacks both style and imagination, unfortunate in a city rich in heritage.

Clock towers lost to time



Vani Vilas Market

The Palace Garage

The Palace Stables

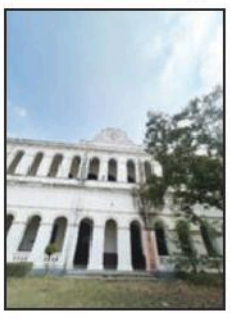
Three clock towers that once existed are known today only through images. The one at Vani Vilas Market collapsed in the early 1990s.

The Palace Garage (1912) became debris and so did its clock, as recalled by a condition-based servicing mechanic.

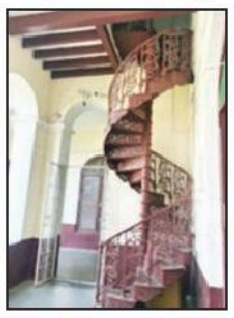
Mysore chronicler Gouri Satya remembers clock towers at KSRTC Bus Stand and Maharani's High School, though sadly no images exist.

Two other heritage *gadiyaras* merit attention — at Railway Station & Maharaja's College. While the former is visible, the latter is not widely known, given its location in the college quadrangle. The Palace Stables (1910) met a similar fate.

Maharaja's College



Clock at the top



Spiral Staircase

The Bell

An old clock in the courtyard of Maharaja's College, once connected to a large bell, is still kept intact in a room below the flagstaff; one must climb a winding staircase to reach the top. The bell was manufactured in 1938 by Taylor's Bell Foundry, UK.

The mechanisms that once enabled the clock chime and gong to ring the bell are no longer present. The college authorities are keen — and rightly so — that the clock be restored to working order so that young minds may imbibe respect for heritage and be exposed to the study of Horology.

It would have augured well for the University of Mysore if it had similarly introspected and worked in-house while marking its centenary, instead of constructing a new clock tower at Manasagangothri campus.

Changing times...

In ever-accelerating pace of city life, time has become a blur. Urban living is no longer tuned to clockwork precision; schedules are flexible, fragmented and unpredictable. This reflects a move toward personalised, handheld mobile time, rejecting the orderliness of the past. Yet the importance of clock towers cannot be undermined, as seen in recent additions. However, newer structures often forgo aesthetics — an unfortunate trend for a city proud of its heritage tag.

Many heritage towers require careful conservation within proper heritage precincts. Half-hearted restoration, inappropriate processes and unnecessary tampering risk diminishing antiquity and silencing the stories these towers have narrated for generations. Changing with the times, Fairy Godmother might well have added a mobile phone to Cinderella's gift hamper to remind her of the time — because, after all, not every clock tower can now be relied upon!

*Dr. Maya Sitaram, a student of Development Studies with a Doctorate from University of Mysore, has a penchant for writing blogs — **Maya's Muzings.** She loves music and her passion for plants got her interested in the art of Bonsai. A Board Game Collector and a Travel Buff, she has a sizeable collection of traditional Indian Board Games.*

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STAR OF MYSORE Estd. 1979 49 JOURNALISM PAR EXCELLENCE

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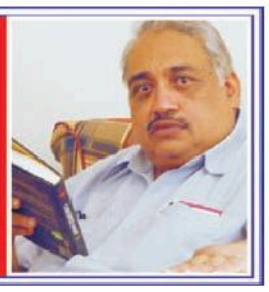


By Dr. K. Javeed Nayeem, MD

My tryst with Mark Tully & the Radio!

Sir Mark Tully, undoubtedly the 'Grand Old Man' of news broadcasting, said his last 'Good Night' to this world last month, on 25th January, though not over the radio, over which he had said whatever he had to say, over thirty long years.

An Indian-born British journalist, he joined the ***British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)*** in 1964 and moved over to India a year later, becoming its Indian correspondent. He served the *BBC* for exactly thirty years, the last twenty as its Indian bureau chief, based in New Delhi.

Though he studied in England and took up his first job there, India, which eventually became his home, was not new to him, because he was born to British parents at Tollygunge in Calcutta on 24th October, 1935. He spent his first ten years in India, going to a British boarding school at Darjeeling at the age of four, before he was dispatched to England for further schooling, at the age of nine.

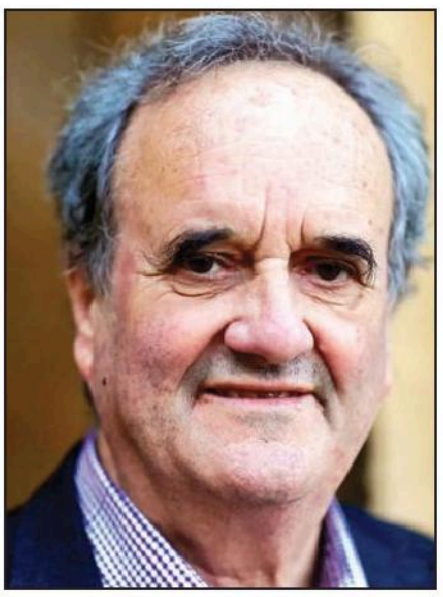
I use the word 'dispatched' here, because his going there was perhaps meant to give him a proper 'English' upbringing, when his English nanny found him learning, to count numbers in Hindi, from their driver. She was greatly appalled that her ward was picking up what she felt was the language of his servants, when he was being groomed to become their master.

So, from *ek, do, teen* **in Tollygunge, it was a quick transition to one, two and three at Cambridge for him!** As a student at Cambridge, he studied Theology and after finishing his graduation, he joined the Lincoln Theological College, with plans of becoming a priest of the Church of England.

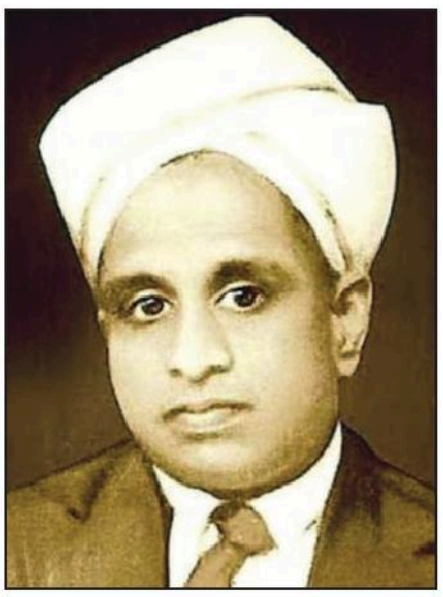
But as a student there, he began to have misgivings about whether he would be able to hold on to the celibacy that was mandatory for a Christian priest, which led to his saying goodbye to the calling, after just two terms.

Thankfully, this realisation came to him sooner than later, because had it surfaced in him after he had taken his vows of celibacy, he would perhaps have been a very frustrated man, torn between the need to hold on to them as a good Christian priest and the biological urge to lead the life of a family man. And, in his taking this crucial decision, he was perhaps right too, because he married a lady called Margaret and had four children through her, proving to himself and to all others, that he was certainly not cut out to be a celibate priest!

While in the service of the *BBC*, he covered all the major events and incidents in South Asia, including the Indo-Pak conflicts, the Bhopal gas tragedy, Operation Blue Star, the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the ensuing anti-Sikh riots and the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, to mention just a few.



Sir Mark Tully



Prof. M.V. Gopalaswamy

> "Because it was the *BBC* that we always turned to for world news on radio in our home, Mark Tully quickly became my favourite newscaster and long after he quit *BBC*, the channel has still remained the dominant source of world news for me, over many years..."

Although as a prestigious Pressman he enjoyed a very good personal rapport with Indira Gandhi, he had to spend time on English soil, when he was expelled from India during Emergency, which she declared as an act of self-preservation, when cornered by the long arm of the law.

However, after a year-and-a-half in exile, Tully returned to India, to which he certainly had a special attachment, instead of seeking a posting to some another region of the world, although at that time there were many other very opportune playing fields, open to a man of his prowess. And, it is in India that he stayed, till his very end, dying at the ripe old age of ninety, at a hospital in Delhi, where he lived, most of his life.

He resigned from the *BBC* in 1984 and turned to writing books about his experiences and about the transformation the country of his birth was going through. I have read every one of his nearly ten books and found them so interesting and informative that they now find a place of pride among my most favourite books.

Now, to tell you how I bumped into Mark Tully, I have to take you back to the days of my childhood, as the son of a man whose most passionate hobby, besides reading and photography, was to build radios at home. Yes, my dad, who led most of his life as a coffee planter, had a short stint as a Reader of Psychology at the Maharaja's College here in Mysore from where he did his B.A. Honours. And, at that time, one of his teachers who was closest to him, was **Prof. M.V. Gopalaswamy (MVG),** the man who started a private radio station in his house, **Vitthala Vihar,** in Vontikoppal, during September 1936 and who very aptly and in a masterstroke of innovation, named his channel as **Akashvani,** a name that has stuck steadfastly, ever since it was officially adopted in 1957, as the on-air name of All India Radio.

However, some sources say that the name was suggested to MVG by the mother of his colleague and fellow teacher at the Maharaja's College, Na. Kasturi, who later became the first Assistant Director of Mysore Radio Station. Very interestingly, although **Na. Kasturi,** being originally from Kerala, had had all his education in Malayalam, he rose up to quickly become a giant to reckon with, in Kannada literature!

MVG went on to become the Principal of the Maharaja's College and upon his retirement from there he moved to Bangalore, where he established a mental hospital that has now grown to become the **National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS).**

My dad, due to his close association with MVG, perhaps found the radio engineering skills of his professor more alluring than the Psychology that he used to teach, which led to his spending all his spare time in helping the grand-old radio-man in his pursuits to upgrade his thirty-watt Philips transmitter to greater strengths.

And, my dad's strange fascination for playing with radio waves persisted long after he bid adieu to Psychology and teaching, to return to his roots in the deepest reaches of the Western Ghats, to tend to the land that his father had left for him and his siblings. By that time he had become an avid radio hobbyist, studying books about building radios and constantly putting that knowledge to test.

So, ever since I came on the scene, as the first-born child of my parents, right from my infancy, I too developed an ear for the static raster of home-made, valve driven radios, long before I could comprehend the words that came out of them! Thanks to my mom's great devotion to preserving things from the past, we still have to this day, all my dad's books and extensive hand-written notes, both about Psychology and radio engineering and all his good old radios, carefully preserved in our home.

And, my childhood fascination for the radio too has thankfully remained preserved with me to this day, despite all the other gadgets that surround me. **Although I do not watch television even for five minutes in a year, yes, you read me right, I still listen to the radio regularly, although now, with the advent of FM transmission, there is not much of shortwave transmission going on in the world.**

Still, I never miss or long for what I do not see on television, as long as I have piles of books around me and a trusty radio set sitting by my bedside. I have just no use for what someone has very rightly called the 'Idiot Box,' for it is exactly that, considering all the distorted tripe that comes out of it as news and entertainment these days!

Because it was the *BBC* that we always turned to for world news on radio in our home, Mark Tully quickly became my favourite newscaster and long after he quit *BBC*, the channel has still remained the dominant source of world news for me, over many years.

Before the advent of digital radio, with the facility to have pre-set frequencies, I used to always have two radios on hand. One to play around with different stations and the other tuned exactly for 11.955 MHz, the frequency of the *BBC's* Asian broadcast. **All I had to do then was to just flick the switch every morning, without having to struggle to tune the radio, to hear Mark's booming voice telling me what was happening around the world!**

Rest in Peace Mark... you'll be missed, but not forgotten!

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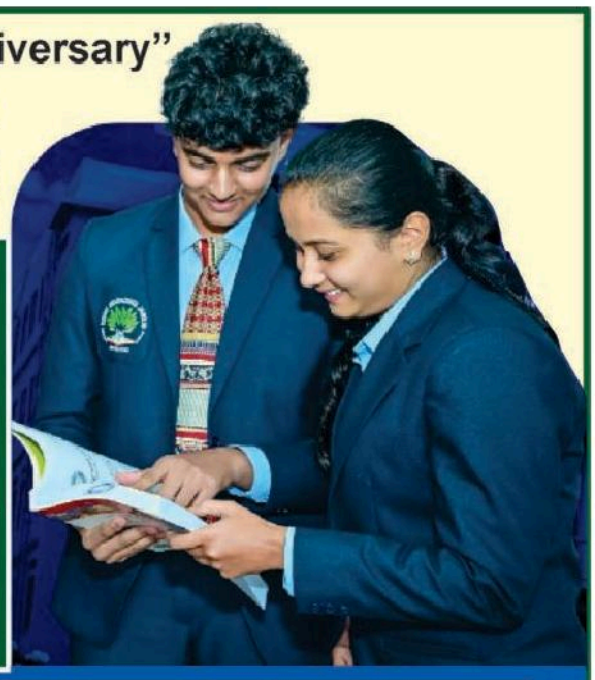

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Vintage Vignettes from a ...

Princely State

Star of Mysore, in collaboration with Ramsons Kala Pratishtana, will be publishing a pictorial series titled 'Vintage Vignettes from a Princely State' starting today. —Ed

By R.G. Singh
Secretary, Ramsons Kala Pratishtana

On 30th December 1894, two days after the passing away of H.H. Chamarajendra Wadiyar Bahadur X, the British Government of India announced the succession of 10-year-old H.H. Krishnaraja Wadiyar Bahadur to the throne of Mysore.

Lord Elgin, the then Viceroy, with his Lady, came to Mysore on an official visit. This photograph was shot on 21st November 1895, in the old portion of the Mysore Palace.

Here, the Viceroy Lord Elgin and his wife, Vicereine Lady Constance Carnegie, are seated on the right of the young Maharaja.

Notable Mysoreans, five of them standing in this photograph *(from left)* are: 1. Dewan Sir Kumarapuram Sheshadri Iyer, 2. T.R.A. Thumboo Chetty C.I.E. (Chief Judge of the Chief Court of Mysore), 3. P.N. Krishnamurti K.C.I.E. (Judge of the Chief Court of Mysore and later served as 16th Dewan), 4. Sir Maddur Kantharaj Urs (served as the 20th Dewan) and 5. Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman (Deputy Commissioner of Shimogga).

Elgin served as Viceroy of India from 1894 to 1899. He has famously quipped: "India is the pivot of our Empire... If the Empire loses any other part of its Dominion, we can survive, but if we lose India, the sun of our Empire will have set."

[Details about the personalities are from the book 'History of Mysore and Yadava Dynasty' by G.R. Josyer]

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Duct in Danger

(Continued from page 9)

These elevated concrete water-carrying structures are located at Belagola (Mandya), Siddalingapura (Mysuru-Bengaluru Road) and Gejjagalli (Mysuru-Nanjangud Road).

Concern now centres on a 1.8-km stretch of the aqueduct supported by more than 10 pillars. Cracks have developed in parts of the structure, with reinforcement rods becoming visible as the concrete peels away. The damage is believed to be aggravated by intense heat from fires lit on dumped waste below.

Cable burning suspected

Though it remains unclear who is responsible, the secluded area is reportedly being used to burn copper cables to extract metal for sale in scrap yards. The cables may be stolen or illegally obtained, but are destroyed to retrieve copper for a small profit.

Police alert irrigation authorities

The issue has gained urgency after Jayalakshmipuram Police Inspector Kumar, who also holds the additional charge of Narasimharaja Police Station, wrote to the Executive Engineer of Cauvery Neeravari Nigam Limited (CNNL).

In his Feb. 14 letter, the Inspector stated that miscreants were dumping waste and burning wires beneath the aqueduct, causing cracks in the pillars. He urged immediate repairs and strict action against those responsible, warning that authorities could be held accountable for any untoward incident in future.

Risk of collapse and pollution

Speaking to *Star of Mysore*, Inspector Kumar cautioned that collapse of even one pillar could bring down a portion of the aqueduct, flooding nearby agricultural fields and residential areas. The risk is particularly serious as the aqueduct passes above the Mysuru-Bengaluru Highway near Siddalingapura and the Mysuru-Nanjangud Road near Gejjagalli.

Night-time burning of waste is also causing severe air pollution due to the release of toxic fumes, posing health hazards to residents of surrounding areas.

Apart from nearby villages, several residential areas could be affected, including Amrutha Layout developed by the Karnataka Slum Development Board, Naguvanahalli, Devanur, parts of Rajivnagar, Hanchya-Sathagalli and Bharath Nagar.

Authorities acknowledge grave problem

CNNL officials said, inspections had been carried out and complaints lodged with Siddalingapura Gram Panchayat, but no action followed. Authorities plan intensified enforcement next week, including visits to nearby factories to warn against dumping and burning activities that threaten the aqueduct's foundation.

CNNL has also written to the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) regional office in Mysuru, which in turn informed Siddalingapura Gram Panchayat, but the issue persists.

Inspector Kumar had earlier written to the KSPCB regional office in Hebbal Industrial Area on Feb. 2, 2026, seeking intervention in the interest of public health.

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Ex Corporator, Mysuru Mahanagara Palike

Will CM Siddaramaiah, Varuna MLA, intervene?

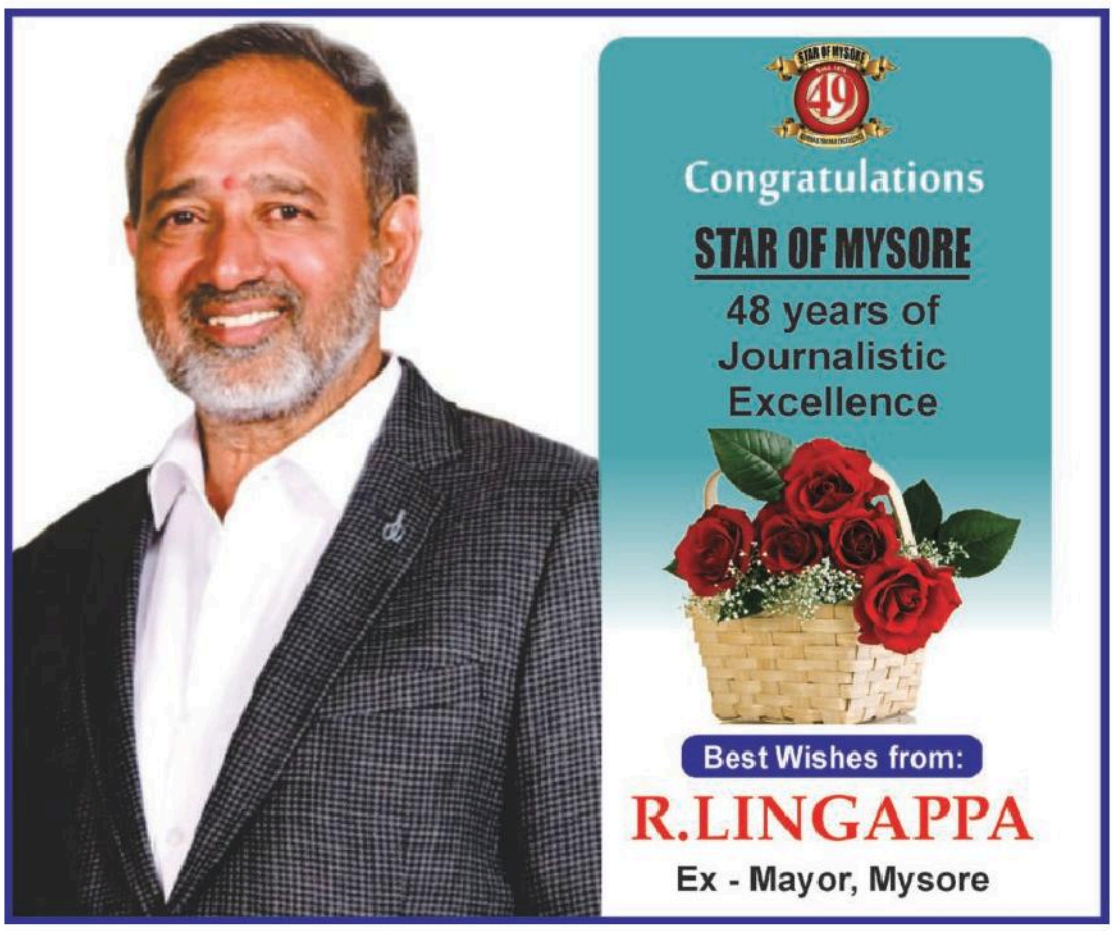
Any mention of Varuna Canal (D. Devaraj Urs Canal) inevitably brings up the name of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the current Varuna MLA, widely regarded as the driving force behind the major irrigation project that has become a landmark structure.

Siddaramaiah

With Mysuru being his hometown, there is growing concern that the present issue affecting the canal's aqueduct must be addressed without delay to preserve the structure for future generations.

On Feb. 13 and 14, an International Conference on Dam Safety was held in Bengaluru, organised by the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources. Panel discussions focused on ageing dams and state-of-the-art rehabilitation practices, risk-informed decision-making for dam safety and dam failure case studies.

While dams and aqueducts differ in structure, both serve the common purpose of carrying water to irrigate agricultural land. Any failure in such infrastructure could have disastrous consequences and add to the list of man-made disasters.



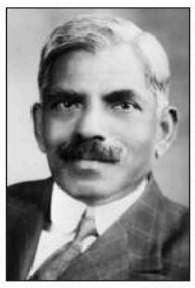
Mysore State joins the Republic of India

The turbulent period - Aug. 15, 1947 to Jan. 26, 1950

By Dr. C.D. Sreenivasa Murthy

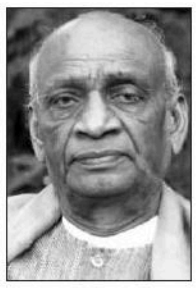
Physician, Cardiologist and Member of Freemasons Lodge Mysore No. 34

Lord Mountbatten



A.R. Mudaliar

V.P. Menon



Sardar Patel

Before independence, the British governed India through a dual system. Approximately two-thirds of the country was under direct British control via Presidencies and Provinces, managed by Governors or Commissioners. The remainder consisted of **Princely States,** which were ruled by local monarchs under treaties with British Crown.

While Britain held suzerainty — acting as the paramount power — these States enjoyed relative administrative autonomy, though defence, communications and external affairs remained under British jurisdiction.

The lapse of suzerainty and the challenge of accession

When the British Government decided to exit the subcontinent by partitioning it into India and Pakistan, British suzerainty over the Princely States lapsed. Technically, this rendered more than 540 States independent. **Viceroy Lord Mountbatten** advised these rulers to join either India or Pakistan, primarily based on geographical contiguity.

At the dawn of independence, the largest of these States were Kashmir, Hyderabad and Mysore. Home Minister **Sardar Patel** and his Secretary, **V.P. Menon,** spearheaded the reorganisation of these States. They urged rulers to sign two key documents:

1. **The Instrument of Accession:** Ceding defence, communications and external affairs to the Central Government.
2. **The Standstill Agreement:** Ensuring administrative continuity during the transition.

Among the major States, **Jayachamaraja Wadiyar**, the Maharaja of Mysore, was the **first to sign** these documents on August 9, 1947. They were formally accepted by Lord Mountbatten on August 16, 1947. In contrast, Kashmir and Hyderabad refrained from signing at the time of independence.

The 'Mysore Chalo' Movement

Despite the Maharaja's early accession, domestic tension rose. The Mysore State Congress and various freedom fighters demanded that the Maharaja replace the rule of the **Dewan, Sir Arcot Ramaswamy Mudaliar,** with a popular, representative Government. When this transition did not immediately occur, the **'Mysore Chalo'** Movement **(also known as the Palace Satyagraha)** was launched.

Led by **Sri K. Chengalraya Reddy,** the movement saw activists from across the State converge on Mysore City. The agitation occasionally turned violent; notably, a student named **Ramaswamy** was killed during Police firing at a major intersection. Today, the 'Five Lights Circle' on JLB Road in Mysore is named **Ramaswamy Circle** in his honour.

While Dewan Mudaliar and Private Secretary T. Thamboo Chetty were criticised at the time for allegedly delaying the establishment of a responsible Government, history also credits Mudaliar for his instrumental role in guiding Mysore's swift integration into the Indian Union.

[Continued on Page - 68]

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Mysore State joins the Republic of India

[Continued from Page - 67]

The path to a sovereign republic

Succumbing to popular demand, Maharaja invited **K.C. Reddy** to become the first CM of Mysore. The oath of office was administered at the Mysore Palace on October 25, 1947, with A.R. Mudaliar continuing his service as Dewan.

Initially, the Mysore leadership envisioned a federal structure where the State could remain a **constitutional monarchy.** To this end, a **Constituent Assembly** was established by royal proclamation on October 29, 1947.

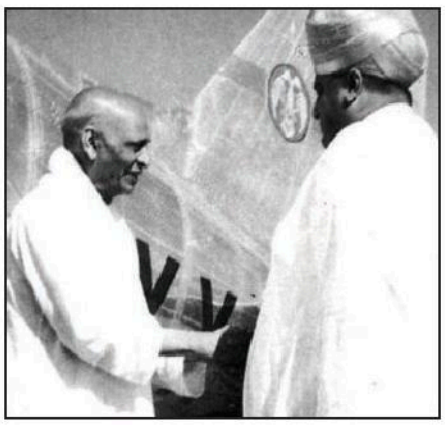
Sardar Patel even sent a congratulatory message, wishing the Assembly success in fashioning a constitution "worthy of the traditions of Mysore."

However, after members were elected for the Constituent Assembly in March 1948 — with the Congress party winning a landslide 68 of 76 seats — the Assembly ultimately decided against a separate constitution. Instead, they resolved in 1949 to adopt the **Constitution of India.**

The inauguration of the Republic

On Nov. 25, 1949, the Maharaja issued a proclamation accepting the Draft Constitution of India. On Jan. 26, 1950, Mysore officially became a **Part-B State** of the Union. The Maharaja's role transitioned to that of **Rajapramukh** (Constitutional Governor). The historic day was marked by a grand ceremony:

- **10.15 am:** A special durbar was held at the Mysore Palace, where the Maharaja read the proclamation of the Indian Republic and took his oath as Rajapramukh.
- **Military honours:** A 21-gun salute was fired from the Palace battery.
- **Public celebration:** The Maharaja drove from the Palace to Government House for a ceremonial parade and the unfurling of the National Flag.
- **Evening festivities:** The day concluded with a garden party for 2,000 guests at the Chamundi Gymkhana.

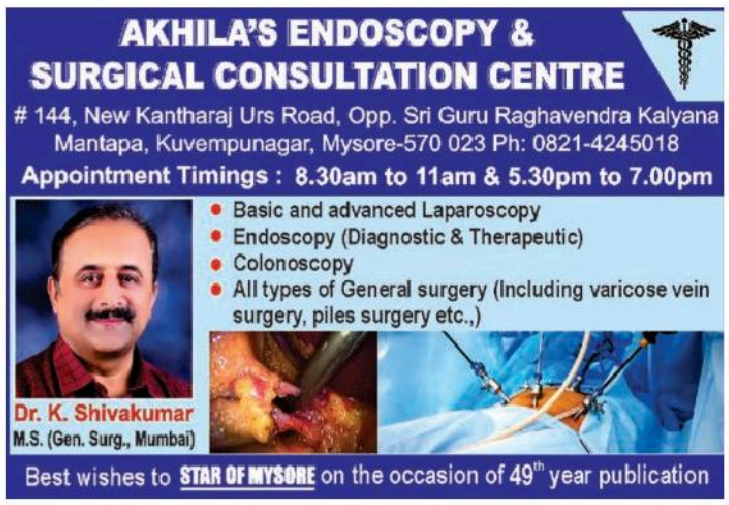


The **Mysore Constituent Assembly continued to serve as the State's provisional Legislative Assembly** until the first general elections were held in 1952.

Maharaja Jayachamaraja Wadiyar, born on July 18, 1919, was a towering figure in both stature and spirit — handsome, highly educated and deeply cultured. At the young age of twenty-one, he ascended the throne of the Princely State of Mysore on Sept. 8, 1940, becoming its 25th Maharaja.

His reign came to a historic close on Jan. 26, 1950, when Mysore merged with the newly formed Indian Republic. He stood as the 25th sovereign of the illustrious Wadiyar dynasty, a royal lineage that began with Raja Wadiyar in 1399 and ruled Mysore uninterrupted for 651 years.

On India's first Republic Day, the magnificent Wadiyar dynasty gracefully passed from the realm of power into the pages of history.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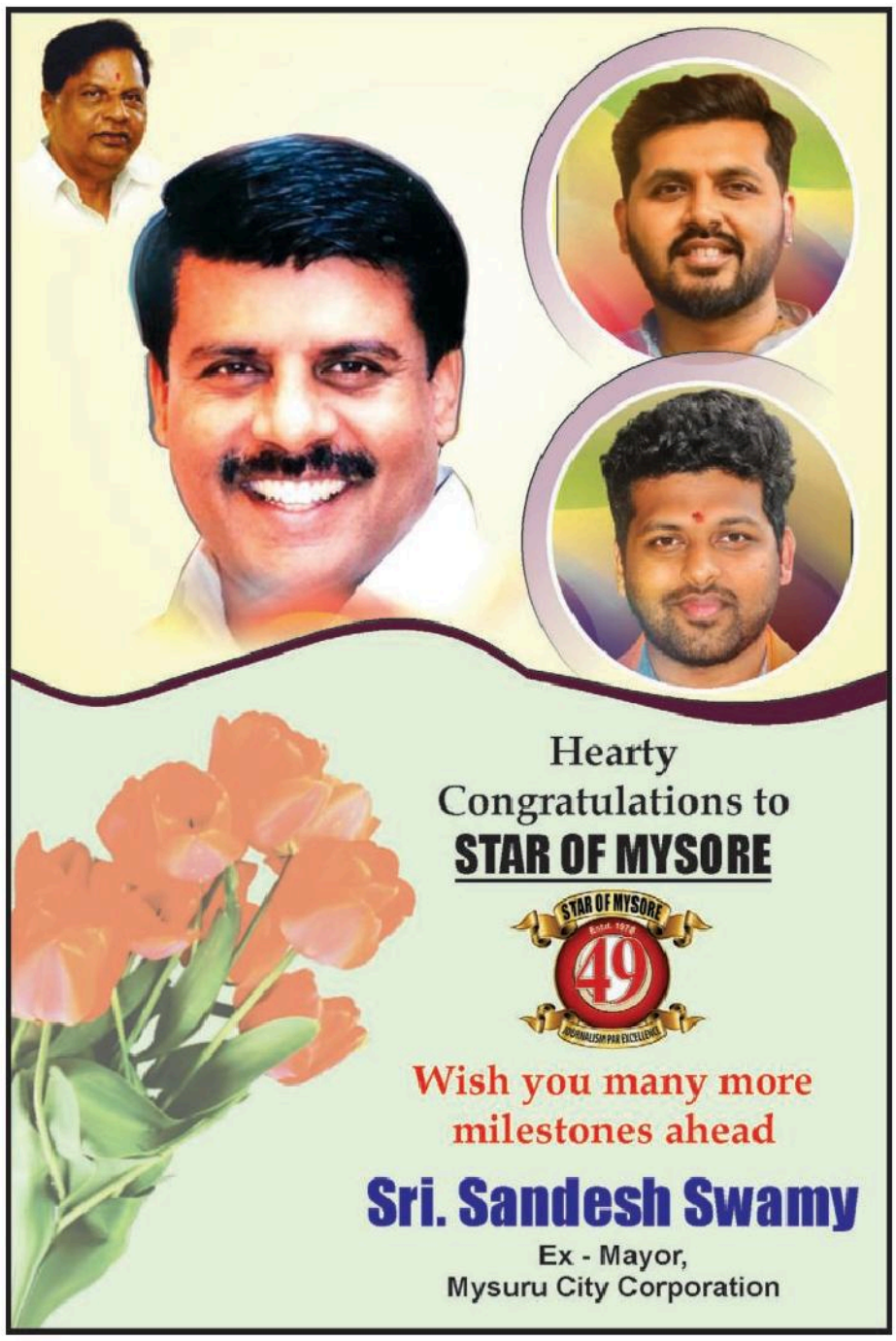
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Wish you many more
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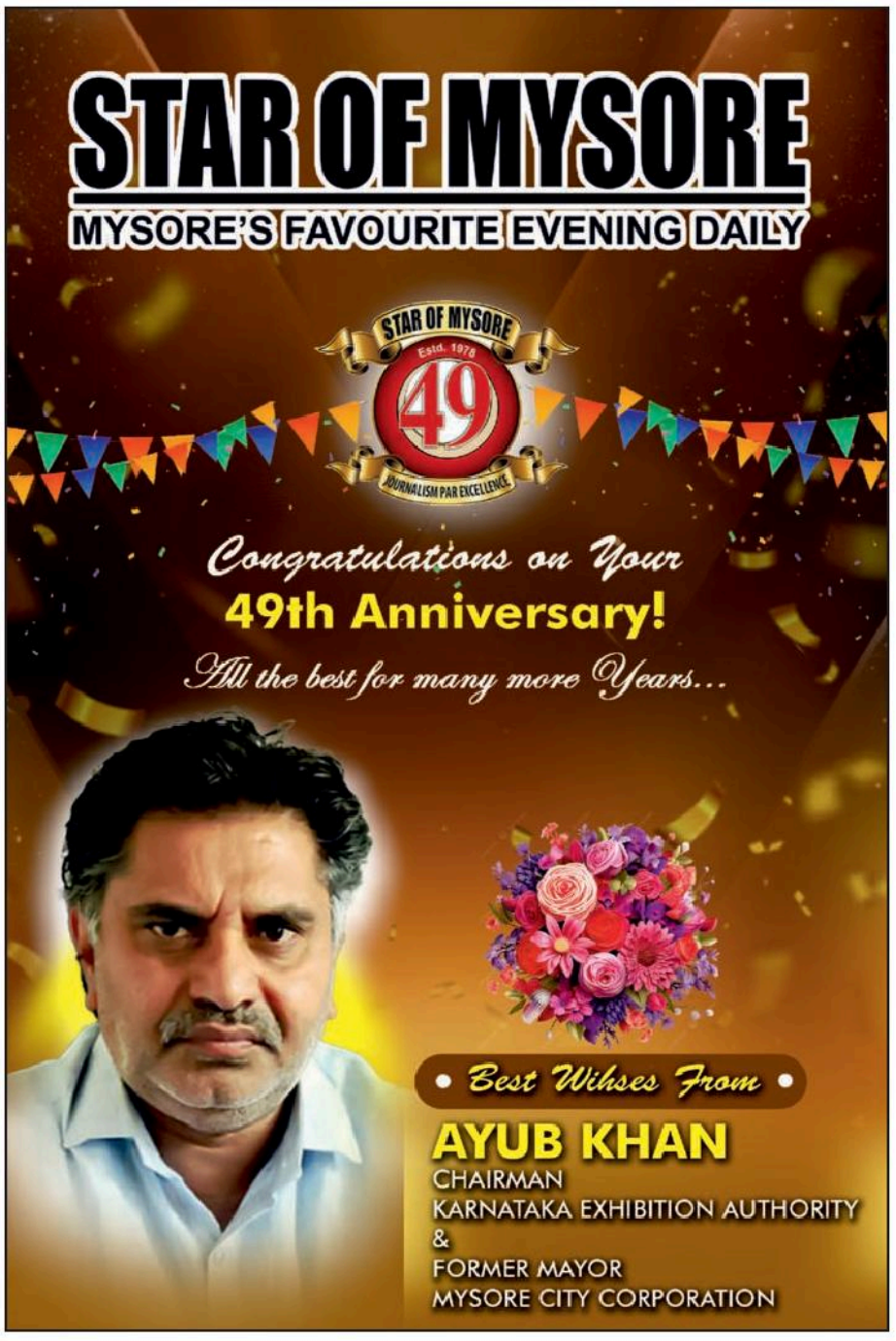
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Bharath Manjegowda
Industrialist

Tradition with Modern Touch

[Continued from Page - 54]

Mohan Kumar credits veteran artisans for refining his skills, patiently guiding him through the nuances of the traditional craft. "They chiselled my artistic abilities," he says, acknowledging the role of mentors who helped him understand not just the technique, but the soul of the art.

Today, his works are sought after not only in Mysuru but across the country and abroad. The growing demand prompted him to take the next step — entrepreneurship. Under the banner of M.K. Enterprises, Mohan Kumar has brought together a group of skilled artists to collectively meet the rising interest in Mysore Inlay artefacts.

Speaking to *Star of Mysore*, Mohan Kumar says that while Mysore Inlay Art is deeply rooted in tradition, it has also evolved with time.

"We have given it a modern touch to suit the tastes of tourists and contemporary art lovers, without diluting its essence," he explains.

Many of his works draw inspiration from the creations of senior inlay artist Puttaraju, whose designs form the foundation for several pieces. This blending of classical design with modern presentation has struck a chord with buyers, especially visitors looking for authentic Mysuru souvenirs.

Infusing life into wood

Mohan Kumar's journey has taken his art far beyond the city limits. He has displayed his works at exhibitions across India — from Kashmir to Kanyakumari — and has showcased Mysore Inlay Art internationally in countries such as the United States, Italy, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Dubai and other European destinations.

Each exhibition, he says, reaffirms the global appeal of the craft and the curiosity it sparks among art enthusiasts unfamiliar with wood-based inlay tradition.

What sets Mysore Inlay Art apart, Mohan Kumar explains, is the engraving done on wood — unlike many other countries where engravings are typically done on metal.

A variety of wood sourced from trees such as tamarind, jackfruit, 'badak', 'parimagam', 'maddi' and 'khadga' are used in the process. "As the name suggests, inlay art is about infusing life into a wooden piece," he says.

To France for a watch dial

A watch manufacturing company in France, wowed by the dazzling appeal of Mysore Inlay Art, has placed an order with Mohan Kumar.

"A French watch company has ordered 30 mm artwork. I have already sent an artwork measuring 1.2 inches and work on another is underway. This artwork will be used to print it on the dial of wrist watches," says Mohan Kumar, with a tinge of pride on his face.

Painstaking process

Creating a single inlay piece is a painstaking process involving several stages. It begins with a creative painting, which is then traced onto a sheet. After selecting the wood, the traced design is pasted and carefully sketched.

The wood is then cut according to the shapes in the design. Each piece is arranged precisely, followed by pressing, buffing, polishing and engraving. A final wax coating gives the artwork its sheen before it is framed and readied for display.

Taking art to people

To make the art more accessible, Mohan has opened a sales outlet on Link Road in N.R. Mohalla, where his works are displayed and sold. Many of the pieces created here have found homes overseas.

"There is a growing demand," he says. "Some art cognoscenti even send photographs of their choice and ask us to convert them into inlay artworks."

A National Award-winning artisan who conducts live demonstrations of his craft, Mohan Kumar is the son of Basavaraju and Bhagya.

He has an elder sister Roopa, a home-maker and elder brother 'Snake' Shivu, a wildlife photographer ▪

[Translated by B. Sreekantswamy]

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Best for: Stress relief, heart health, weight management.
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Supports cardiovascular fitness.
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Improves insulin sensitivity.

Tip: Great time for brisk walk or social walk.

NIGHT WALK (8–9 PM)

Best For: Blood sugar control; better sleep (gentle pace).
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